THE

LAST BOER WAR

BY

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WORKS BY H. RIDER HAGGARD.

CETYWAYO AND HIS WHITE NEIGHBOURS.
DAWN.
KING SOLOMON'S MINES.
THE WITCH'S HEAD.
SHE.
ALLAN QUATERMAIN.
JESS.
COLONEL QUARITCH, V.C.
MAIWA'S REVENGE.
MR. MEESON'S WILL.
ALLAN'S WIFE.
CLEOPATRA.
BEATRICE.
ERIC BRIGHTEYES.
NADA THE LILY.
MONTEZUMA'S DAUGHTER.
THE PEOPLE OF THE MIST.
JOAN HASTE.
HEART OF THE WORLD.
DOCTOR THERNE.
SWALLOW.
A FARMER'S YEAR.

IN COLLABORATION WITH ANDREW LANG.

THE WORLD'S DESIRE.

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

It has been suggested that at this juncture some students of South African history might be glad to read an account of the Boer Rebellion of 1881, its causes and results. Accordingly, in the following pages are reprinted portions of a book which I wrote so long ago as 1882. It may be objected that such matter must be stale, but I venture to urge, on the contrary, that to this very fact it owes whatever value it may possess. This history was written at the time by one who took an active part in the sad and stirring events which it records, immediately after the issue of those events had driven him home to England. Of the original handful of individuals who were concerned in the annexation of the Transvaal by Sir Theophilus Shepstone in 1877, of whom I was one, not many now survive. When they have gone, any further accurate report made from an intimate personal knowledge of the incidents attendant on that act will be an impossibility; indeed it is already impossible, since after the lapse of twenty years men can scarcely trust to their memories for the details of intricate political occurrences, even should they be

prompted to attempt their record. It is for this reason, when the melancholy results which its pages foretell have overtaken us, that I venture to lay them again before the public, so that any who are interested in the matter may read and find in the tale of 1881 the true causes of the war of 1899.

I have written "which its pages foretell." Here are one or two passages taken from them almost at hazard that may be thought to justify the words:

"It seems to me, however, to be a question worthy of the consideration of those who at present direct the destinies of the Empire, whether it would not be wise, as they have gone so far, to go a little farther, and favour a scheme for the total abandonment of South Africa, retaining only Table Bay. If they do not, it is now quite within the bounds of possibility that they may one day have *to face a fresh Transvaal rebellion, only on a ten times larger scale*, and might find it difficult to retain even Table Bay."

And again: "The curtain, so far as this country is concerned, is down for the moment on the South African stage; when it rises again, there is but too much reason to fear that it will reveal a state of confusion which, unless it is more wisely and consistently dealt with in the future than it has been in the past, may develop into chaos."

One more quotation. In speaking of the various problems of South Africa, I find that I said that "unless they are treated with more honest intelligence, and

on a more settled plan than it has hitherto been thought necessary to apply to them, the British taxpayer will find that he has by no means heard the last of that country and its wars."

Perhaps in a year from the present date the British taxpayer will be in a position to admit the value of this prophecy.

Nearly two decades have gone by since these words were written. Put very briefly, what has happened in that time? In 1884, at the request of the Transvaal Government, the Ministry, of which the late Lord Derby was a member, consented to modify the Convention of 1881, and to substitute in its place what is known as the London Convention. This new agreement amended the terms of the former document in certain particulars. Notably all mention of the suzerainty of the Queen was omitted, from which circumstance the Boers and their impassioned advocates have argued that it was abrogated. There is nothing to show that this contention is correct. Mere silence does not destroy so important a stipulation, and it appears to be doubtful whether even a Lord Derby would have been prepared to nullify the imperial rights of his sovereign and his country in this negative and novel fashion. It is more probable to suppose that had such action been decided on, effect would have been given to it in direct and unmistakable language. But even if it could be proved that this view of the case is wrong, the general issue would scarcely be affected.

That issue, as I understand it, is as follows: The Convention of 1881 guaranteed to all inhabitants of the Transvaal equal rights—"Complete self-government subject to the suzerainty of her Majesty, her heirs and successors, will be accorded to the *inhabitants of the Transvaal territory*"—Mr. Kruger explaining verbally at a meeting of the conference, that the only difference would be that in the case of young persons who became resident in the Transvaal, there might be some slight delay in granting full burgher privileges, limited, it would appear, to one year's residence.[1] After that time, then, according to the terms of this solemn agreement, which in these particulars were not modified or even touched, by the supplementary and amending paper of 1884, any one who wished to claim the advantages of Transvaal citizenship might do so.

Some years later an event occurred fated profoundly to influence the destinies of South Africa, namely, the discovery of the Witwatersrand gold deposits, perhaps the richest and the most permanent in the whole world. Instantly adventurers, most of them of Anglo-Saxon origin, flocked in thousands to the place where countless wealth lay buried in the earth, and on the plains over which I have seen the wild game wander-

[1] In 1881, when the Convention was being discussed, President Kruger was asked by our representative what treatment would be given to British subjects in the Transvaal. He said, "All strangers have now, and will always have, equal rights and privileges to the Burghers of the Transvaal."—*Quotation from Speech of* MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN, *June* 26, 1899.

ing, sprang up the city of Johannesburg with its motley and cosmopolitan population, its speculators, company promoters, traders, miners, and labouring men.

To the Transvaal, at any rate in the beginning, the arrival of these wealth-engendering hordes was what the fall of copious rain is to the sun-parched veld. By this time the country was once more almost bankrupt, but now, as though by the waving of a magician's wand, money began to flow into its coffers. One of the characteristics of the Boer is his hatred of taxation; one of his notions of terrestrial bliss is to live in a land where the necessary expenses of administration are paid by somebody else, an advantage, I understand, that among all the civilised nations of the earth is enjoyed alone by the inhabitants of the Principality of Monaco. It is not usual, either in the instance of communities or individuals, that such ideals should be absolutely attained. Yet to the fortunate possessors of the South African Republic this happened. For quite a long period they lived at ease in their dorps and on their farms, while the dwellers at Johannesburg, delving like gnomes in the reefs of the Rand, provided them with magnificent and never-failing supplies of cash. Then questions began to arise, as they will do in this imperfect sphere. The Uitlanders, as the strangers were called, remembering the terms of the Conventions, drawn under a very different condition of affairs but still binding, hinted at a wish for burgher rights.

The Boers, who if they liked their money objected to the money-makers, instantly took alarm. If the vote were given to the Uitlanders it was obvious that very soon they would outnumber the original electors. Then in a natural, but to them terrifying, sequence would come a redistribution of the burdens of taxation, the abolition of monopolies, the punishment of corruption, the just treatment of the native races, the absolute purity of the courts, and all the other things and institutions, in their eyes abominable, which mark the advent of Anglo-Saxon rule. Behind these also loomed another danger, that of the ultimate reappearance of the English flag. So legislation was resorted to, and bit by bit the Uitlanders were stripped of the rights inherent to their position as "inhabitants of the Transvaal territory," till at last none were left to them at all. Indeed Press laws were passed and other enactments controlling the privilege of free speech and public meetings. Of course had the British Government put down its foot firmly and at once at the first symptom of a desire on the part of the Boers to whittle away such advantages as the Conventions secured to our fellow-subjects, the present sad situation need never have arisen. But British Governments are seldom fond of doing things at the right time, more especially if the issue is not sufficiently distinct to be appreciated by the masses of the electorate. Therefore matters were allowed to drift, and they drifted

Emperor William II., which at one time threatened to bring about a war between Great Britain and Germany. Also, so far as these South African troubles were concerned, it put our country hopelessly in the wrong in the eyes of the civilised world, whom it proved difficult to persuade, although in fact this was the case, that such strange and tortuous developments of political and martial activity were purely local in their origin. Again it armed the Boer with a sword of wondrous power. If Providence had sent all the German legions to his aid it could scarcely have served him better. Now indeed he was able to point to his land violated by the foot of the invader, and to talk of raids as though such a wicked word had never defiled the innocence of his ears; as though in truth he had never heard of the plains of Stellaland, and of a certain expedition sent by the British Government under the command of Sir Charles Warren to preserve those territories to the peaceful enjoyment of their owners; nor of that stretch of country which once belonged to the Zulus, but is now called the New Republic; nor of the trek into Rhodesia that was "damped"; nor of the extension of authority over Swaziland in defiance of the provisions of the Convention, and of other kindred matters.

Also it enabled him to claim "moral and intellectual damages" to a considerable amount, although, so far as the public is aware, these have never been satisfied, and indeed caused Pharaoh to harden his

heart, and while demanding from the new Israelites of Johannesburg an even heavier tale of bricks in the shape of direct and indirect taxation, to deprive them one by one of their last straws of freedom.

Thus things fell back into their former courses, the old abuses flourished like bay trees, the lucky holders of dynamite and other monopolies grew fabulously rich, and—so powerful is the love of gold—*auri sacra fames*—so much more do men value it than freedom and pure government—the population of Johannesburg still increased.

More than two years have gone by since Sir Alfred Milner was sent as High Commissioner to South Africa, during all which time, backed by her Majesty's present Government, he has been doing his best to secure redress for the Uitlanders, and to arrange various differences that have arisen between the Empire and the Transvaal Republic. At length these efforts resulted in the meeting between himself and President Kruger, known as the Bloemfontein Conference, which took place about four months ago. At that Conference Sir Alfred Milner advanced the request, modest enough seeing that they are entitled to nothing less than equal rights with the other "inhabitants of the Transvaal," that those Uitlanders who wished to adopt the country as their home should be entitled to the franchise after five years' residence. This was refused by President Kruger as endangering the independence of the State, and the Conference broke up. It was from this time

forward that war came to be looked upon as probable. In reply to various despatches and representations of the Imperial Government, the President and Volksraad made certain offers of a franchise which, if they were ever seriously meant, were hampered with provisos, such as rendered them impossible for this country to accept. Thus the five years' offer of August 19 was coupled with the conditions that in the future there should be no interference in the internal affairs of the Republic, that her Majesty's Government would not further insist on the assertion of the suzerainty, and that the principle of arbitration in the event of future differences arising should be admitted.

Had the Government agreed to these terms it would have meant, of course, that the last shadow of the Queen's authority would have vanished from the Transvaal, and as they had bound themselves not to interfere in future, that they might be forced to look on while the franchise which was granted one year was repealed or rendered nugatory the next. Also, it must be remembered that this question of the franchise does not cover all the grounds of difference between the two parties; indeed it seems that a great deal too much importance has been given to the matter. Even if a certain number of Uitlanders elected to become citizens of a Boer state, it is difficult to see, however advantageous that circumstance might prove to themselves, in what way it would directly assist the Imperial power on such a question, let us say, as the treatment

of our Indian subjects settled in the Transvaal. To begin with, the new-born burghers might be indifferent to the needs and wishes of the country they had renounced. They might even consider that their oath of allegiance bound them to oppose those wishes. At the least, even if they had the power to help us, which could not be the case for many years, surely it would be neither wise nor dignified for the Power to which they once belonged to trust solely to their good offices.

In the newspapers and elsewhere Johannesburg and its Uitlanders are spoken of continually as though they made up the sum of the situation. It is the common cry of Liberal Forwards and of those gentlemen who might perhaps be called Radical Backwards, that this war is to be waged for the Uitlander and the millionaire. Of course this is not in the least true. The Uitlander, with his woes, is only the blister that has brought the sore of Transvaal misrule and Dutch ambitions in South Africa to so proud a head, that at last the South African Republic has come to describe itself as "a Sovereign independent State." That he and his "Magnates," as Rand millionaires are called, will profit enormously from a successful war waged by the Imperial Power is admitted; but because the effect of such a struggle will be ultimately to put a number of annual millions into certain pockets, it does not follow that the war is fought for that purpose. Indeed the veriest "jingo" could scarcely show himself self-sacrificing and altruistic.

This is no local but an Imperial question to be decided in the interests of the Empire.

To return to the course of the negotiations. Offers, withdrawals, stipulations, palliative clauses, proposals for further conferences followed each other in bewildering variety, till at length, worn out, Mr. Chamberlain, on September 22, intimated to the Government of the South African Republic, through Sir Alfred Milner, that it was "useless to further pursue a discussion on the lines hitherto followed, and her Majesty's Government are now compelled to consider the situation afresh, and to formulate their own proposals for a final settlement of the issues which have been created in South Africa by the policy constantly followed for many years by the Government of the South African Republic. They will communicate to you the result of their deliberations in a later despatch."

It is rumoured that this later despatch has been delivered at Pretoria, but has as yet received no reply. Three days later, however, namely, on September 25, that industrious body, the Liberal Forwards, was honoured with a telegram from the State Secretary of the Transvaal, which runs as follows:—

"Liberal Forwards, London. Many thanks for your telegram. We stick to the Convention, and rely upon England doing the same, as Convention does not allow interference in internal affairs."

When, however, it is remembered that the Con-

vention did allow equal rights to all the "inhabitants of the Transvaal," it will be admitted that this cable is about the strangest of the remarkable series of State documents which of late have emanated from Pretoria. Very aptly it crystallises the spirit of Boer diplomacy —a bold disregard of inconvenient facts.

Meanwhile in South Africa various events of importance have happened. The Orange Free State has openly thrown in its lot with the Transvaal. The Uitlanders have fled by thousands from Johannesburg. The Boers have massed their commandos at various points on the Natal and other British borders, presumably for offensive purposes, since at present they can expect no invasion of their territory. The first of these occurrences reveals the hidden purpose of the Dutch party in South Africa, as at night a sudden flash of lightning reveals the face of the veld. We have never threatened the Orange Free State; it has no grievance, no cause of quarrel, yet suddenly it appears in arms against us. Why? Because its citizens believe that the time has come to translate into action the old dream of the Boers, which so long as five-and-twenty years ago was familiar to the late President Burgers when he spoke of the coming Dutch Republic, with its eight millions of inhabitants ruling supreme in the vast territories between the Zambezi and the Cape. Now the great conspiracy that it has proved so hard to persuade the British public, or a blind section of it, to credit stands un-

veiled, and it has for object nothing less than the expulsion of the English power from Southern Africa—a vain thing fondly imagined, but still a thing with which we must reckon, and it is to be feared by the last stern expedient of arms, since here soft words and diplomacy are of no avail.

Difficult as it is to make the fact understood among a proportion of the home electorate and publicists, it cannot be stated too often or too clearly that this war, which is to come, is a war that was forced upon us by the Boers in their blind ignorance and conceit. The mass of them believe, because they defeated our troops in various small affairs in 1881, that they are a match for the British Empire. Their leaders are better instructed. They trust not so much, perhaps, to the rifles of their compatriots as to the prowess of certain party captains in England, and to the enthusiasm of their advocates among the English Press and public. They remember that the activity of these forces eighteen years ago was followed by a miserable surrender on the part of the English Government, and not understanding how greatly opinion has changed in this country, they hope that history may repeat itself, and that England, wearying of an unpopular struggle, will soon cede to them all they ask. They are mistaken, but such is their faith. They hope also, perchance with better reason, that other complications may force us to stay our hand. If no more telegrams can be extracted

from the German Emperor, still there is a German regiment fighting on their side who will take with them the sympathies of the Fatherland, and they know that the hearts of the great Powers of Europe will go out towards any people who try to strike a blow at the root of the ever-growing tree of the might of the British Empire. Buoyed up by bubbles such as these they have determined to tempt the stern arbitrament of battle.[1]

Can it still be avoided? It would seem that except by our surrender, which is out of the question, for that means the loss not only of South Africa, but of our prestige throughout the world, this is not in any way possible. Already acts of war have taken place, such as the seizure of the gold from the mines, and the commandeering of goods belonging to British subjects, and perhaps days before these lines can appear in print the guns will have begun their reasoning.[2]

After the rebellion of 1881 a Boer jury, to whom the case was committed by the tender mercies of Mr. Gladstone's Government, with the murdered man's

[1] See the very remarkable letter of the Boer "P. S." to the *Times* of October 14th, printed as Appendix III. to this book, p. 241.

[2] Since the above was written, in the swift march of events, the Transvaal has despatched its "ultimatum," perhaps the most egregious document ever addressed to a great Power by a petty State. In effect it is a declaration of war, and hostilities have now commenced with the destruction by the Boers of an armoured train at Kraaipan, and the capture or slaying of its escort.

14th October 1899. H. R. H.

bullet-riddled skull lying before them upon the table of the Court, acquitted the brutal slaughterers of Captain Elliot, not because they had not done the deed with every circumstance of horrible treachery and premeditation, but because to find them guilty was against their brethren's wish. In much the same way, with all the facts staring them in the face, there are men in England, some of them of high position and character, who urge the righteousness of the Boer cause, and with tongue and pen paint our national iniquity in hues black as ink and red as blood. They write of the "Objects of the War," which they do not hesitate to describe as self-seeking and infamous, so far of course as the English people 'are concerned, for according to the same authorities, the Boer objects are uniformly pure and noble. Would it not be better if they looked back a little and tried to discover the causes of the war? I think that if they could have witnessed a certain scene upon the market-square at Newcastle, at which it was my misfortune to be present, on that night of the year 1881 when the news of the base betrayal of the loyalists by England became known, they would win a better understanding of the question. In the spectacle of that maddened crowd of three or four thousand ruined and deserted men, English, Boer, and Kaffir, raving, weeping, and blaspheming in the despair of their shame and bitterness, they might have found enlightenment. Even now a study of the following forgotten

letter written by Mr. White, the chairman of the Committee of Loyal Inhabitants, to Mr. Gladstone, might give to some a food for thought:—

"If, sir, you had seen, as I have seen, promising young citizens of Pretoria dying of wounds received for their country, and if you had had the painful duty, as I have had, of bringing to their friends at home the last mementoes of the departed; if you had seen the privations and discomforts which delicate women and children bore without murmuring for upwards of three months; if you had seen strong men crying like children at the cruel and undeserved desertion of England; if you had seen the long strings of half-desperate loyalists, shaking the dust off their feet as they left the country, as I saw on my way to Newcastle; and if you yourself had invested your all on the strength of the word of England, and now saw yourself in a fair way of being beggared by the acts of the country in whom you trusted, you would, sir, I think, be 'pronounced,' and England would ring with eloquent entreaties and threats which would compel a hearing. . . . We claim, sir, at least as much justice as the Boers. We are faithful subjects of England, and have suffered and are suffering for our fidelity. Surely we, the friends of our country, who stood by her in the time of trial, have as much right to consideration as rebels who fought against her. We rely on her word. We rely on the frequently repeated pledges and promises of her ministers in which we have trusted. We rely on her sense of moral right

not to do us the grievous wrong which this miserable peace contemplates. We rely on her fidelity to obligations, and on her ancient reputation for honour and honesty. We rely on the material consequences which will follow on a breach of faith to us. England cannot afford to desert us after having solemnly pledged herself to us."

"England cannot afford to desert us!" but England, or her rulers, could and did afford itself this luxury. In vain did such men as the late Lord Beaconsfield, the late Lord Cairns, and Lord Salisbury protest and point out dangers. In vain did agonised loyalists flourish their own words and promises in the face of her Majesty's Government; the spirit of party, or the promptings of a newly acquired conscience proved too strong. Her Majesty's loyal subjects were sneered at, insulted, and abandoned, and the Boer, who had butchered them, was bid to go on and prosper.

Now, nearly twenty years afterwards, England is called upon to pay the bill of what is in effect, whatever may have been its motives, one of the most infamous acts that stains the pages of her history. From the moment that the Convention of 1881 was signed it became as certain as anything human can be, that one of two things would happen—either that the Imperial Power must in practice be driven out of South Africa, or that a time would come when it must be forced to assert its dominion even at the price of war.

Now that miserable hour is with us, and we are called upon to suppress by arms a small, but sullen and obstinate people, whom we have taught to believe themselves our equals, if not our superiors. Unless they will yield at the last moment, which seems impossible seeing that the war is of their own choosing, the new settlement of South Africa must be celebrated by a mighty sacrifice of their blood and our blood. Not to dwell upon other griefs and dangers, when, I ask, will the smoke and the smell of it depart from the eyes and nostrils of the dwellers in that unhappy land? As they troop back merrily to their mines and workshops the money-spinners of Johannesburg may forget a past of which, in many instances at least, their chief impression will be that it was unpleasant and unprofitable. But after the Rand is worked out, when the stamps cease to fall heavily by day and night, when the great heaps of tailings no longer increase from month to month, when the broker's voice is quiet in the Exchange, and the promoter inhabits some new city, still the Boer women in the farmhouses will tell their children how the "damned English soldiers" shot their grandfathers and took the land. In South Africa new Irelands will arise, and from the dragon's teeth that we are forced to sow the harvest of hate will spring, and spring again. Thus must we eat of the bitter bread which we have baked, and thus the ill fowl that we reared have come home to roost, bringing their broods with them.

Again and again we have blundered in our treatment

of the Dutch. For instance, with kinder and fairer management they would never have trekked from the Cape sixty years ago. Also, had the promises which were made to them at the annexation in 1877 been kept, and had not Sir Theophilus Shepstone, who grew up amongst them and to whom they were attached, been removed in favour of a military martinet, there would have been no rebellion, let the Cape wire-pullers working under a cloak of loyalty to the Crown strive as they might. But the rebellion came and the defeats, and after these that surrender whereof this country is called upon to pluck the fruit to-day, which, by the Boers, is attributed to those defeats with the fear of their prowess and to nothing else.

And now, in due season, the war comes; an inevitable war which cannot be escaped, and must be fought out to the end. There is only room for one paramount power in Southern Africa!

How all these things happened is told briefly, but I trust clearly, in the following pages. My excuse for reprinting them must be the desire which, it is said, exists among some readers to become better acquainted with the facts that engendered the present fateful crisis.

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

9th October 1899.

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THE TRANSVAAL.

CHAPTER I.

ITS INHABITANTS, LAWS, AND CUSTOMS.

THE Transvaal is a country without a history. Its very existence was hardly known of until about fifty years ago. Of its past we know nothing. The generations who peopled its great plains have passed utterly out of the memory and even the tradition of man, leaving no monument to mark that they have existed, not even a tomb.

During the reign of Chaka, 1813–1828, whose history has been sketched in a previous chapter, one of his most famous generals, Mosilikatze, surnamed the Lion, seceded from him with a large number of his soldiers, and striking up in a north-westerly direction, settled in or about what is now the Morico district of the Transvaal. The country through which Mosilikatze passed was at that time thickly populated with natives of the Basuto or Macatee race, whom the Zulus look upon with great contempt. Mosilikatze expressed the feelings of his tribe in a practical manner, by massacring every living soul of them that came within

his reach. That the numbers slaughtered were very great, the numerous ruins of Basuto kraals all over the country testify.

It was Chaka's intention to follow up Mosilikatze and destroy him, but he was himself assassinated before he could do so. Dingaan, his successor, however, carried out his brother's design, and despatched a large force to punish him. This army, after marching over 300 miles, burst upon Mosilikatze, drove him back with slaughter, and returned hóme triumphant. The invasion is important, because the Zulus claim the greater part of the Transvaal territory by virtue of it.

About the time that Mosilikatze was conquered, 1835–1840, the discontented Boers were leaving the Cape Colony exasperated at the emancipation of the slaves by the Imperial authorities. First they made their way to Natal, but being followed thither by the English flag they travelled further inland over the Vaal River and founded the town of Mooi River Dorp or Potchefstroom. Here they were joined by other malcontents from the Orange Sovereignty, which, though afterwards abandoned, was at that time a British possession. Acting upon

> "The good old rule, the simple plan,
> Of let him take who has the power,
> And let him keep who can,"

the Boers now proceeded to possess themselves of as much territory as they wanted. Nor was this a difficult task. The country was, as I have said, peopled by Macatees, who are a poor-spirited race as compared to the Zulus,. and had had what little courage they

possessed crushed out of them by the rough handling they had received at the hands of Mosilikatze and Dingaan. The Boers, they argued, could not treat them worse than the Zulus had done. Occasionally a chief, bolder than the rest, would hold out, and then such an example was made of him and his people that few cared to follow in his footsteps.

As soon as the Boers were fairly settled in their new home, they began to think about setting up a Government. First they tried a system of Commandants, with a Commandant-general, but this does not seem to have answered. Next, those of their number who lived in Lydenburg district (where the gold-fields now are) set up a Republic, with a President and Volksraad, or popular assembly. This example was followed by the other white inhabitants of the country, who formed another Republic and elected another President, with Pretoria for their capital. The two republics were subsequently incorporated.

In 1852 the Imperial authorities, having regard to the expense of maintaining an effective government over an unwilling people in an undeveloped and half-conquered country, concluded a convention with the emigrant Boers "beyond the Vaal River." The following were the principal stipulations of this convention, drawn up between Major Hogg and Mr. Owen, Her Majesty's Assistant-Commissioners for the settling and adjusting of the affairs of the eastern and north-eastern boundaries of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope on the one part, and a deputation representative of the emigrant farmers north of the Vaal River on the other. It was guaranteed "in the fullest manner on the part of the British Government to the emigrant

farmers beyond the Vaal River the right to manage their own affairs, and to govern themselves according to their own laws, without any interference on the part of the British Government, and that no encroachment shall be made by the said Government on the territory beyond to the north of the Vaal River, with the further assurance that the warmest wish of the British Government is to promote peace, free trade, and friendly intercourse with the emigrant farmers now inhabiting, or who hereafter may inhabit that country, it being understood that this system of non-interference is binding on both parties."

Next were disclaimed, on behalf of the British Government, "all alliances whatever and with whomsoever of the coloured nations to the north of the Vaal River."

It was also agreed "that no slavery is or shall be permitted or practised in the country to the north of the Vaal River by the emigrant farmers."

It was further agreed "that no objection shall be made by any British authority against the emigrant Boers purchasing their supplies of ammunition in any of the British colonies and possessions of South Africa; it being mutually understood that all trade in ammunition with the native tribes is prohibited both by the British Government and the emigrant farmers on both sides of the Vaal River."

These were the terms of this famous convention, which is as slipshod in its diction as it is vague in its meaning. What, for instance, is meant by the territory to the north of the Vaal River? According to the letter of the agreement, Messrs. Hogg and Owen ceded all the territory between the Vaal and Egypt.

This historical document was the Charta of the new-born South African Republic. Under its provisions, the Boers, now safe from interference on the part of the British, established their own Government and promulgated their "Grond Wet," or Constitution.

The history of the Republic between 1852 and 1876 is not very interesting, and is besides too wearisome to enter into here. It consists of an oft-told tale of civil broils, attacks on native tribes, and encroachment on native territories. Until shortly before the Annexation, every burgher was, on coming of age, entitled to receive from the Government 6000 acres of land. As these rights were in the early days of the Republic frequently sold to speculators for such trifles as a bottle of brandy or half a dozen of beer, and as the seller still required his 6000 acres: for a Boer considers it beneath his dignity to settle on less, it is obvious that it required a very large country to satisfy all demands. To meet these demands, the territories of the Republic had to be stretched like an elastic band, and they were stretched accordingly,—at the expense of the natives. The stretching process was an ingenious one, and is very well described in a minute written by Mr. Osborn, the late magistrate at Newcastle, dated 22d September 1876, in these words:—

"The Boers, as they have done in other cases and are still doing, encroached by degrees on native territory, commencing by obtaining permission to graze stock upon portions of it at certain seasons of the year, followed by individual graziers obtaining from native headmen a sort of right or license to squat upon certain defined portions, ostensibly in order to

keep other Boer squatters away from the same land. These licenses, temporarily intended as friendly or neighbourly acts by unauthorised headmen, after a few seasons of occupation by the Boer, are construed by him as title, and his permanent occupation ensues. Damage for trespass is levied by him from the very man from whom he obtained the right to squat, to which the natives submit out of fear of the matter reaching the ears of the paramount chief, who would in all probability severely punish them for opening the door to encroachment by the Boer. After a while, however, the matter comes to a crisis in consequence of the incessant disputes between the Boers and the natives; one or other of the disputants lays the case before the paramount chief, who, when hearing both parties, is literally frightened with violence and threats by the Boer into granting him the land. Upon this the usual plan followed by the Boer is at once to collect a few neighbouring Boers, including a field cornet, or even an acting provisional field cornet, appointed by the field cornet or provisional cornet, the latter to represent the Government, although without instructions authorising him to act in the matter. A few cattle are collected among themselves, which the party takes to the chief, and his signature is obtained to a written document alienating to the Republican Boers a large slice of all his territory. The contents of this document are, as far as I can make out, never clearly or intelligibly explained to the chief, who signs and accepts of the cattle under the impression that it is all in settlement of hire for the grazing licenses granted by his headmen. This, I have no hesitation in saying, is the usual method by which the Boers

obtain what they call cessions to them of territories by native chiefs. In Secocœni's case they allege that his father Sequati cedes to them the whole of his territory (hundreds of square miles) for a hundred head of cattle."

So rapidly did this process go on that the little Republic to the "North of the Vaal River" had at the time of the Annexation grown into a country of the size of France. Its boundaries had only been clearly defined where they abutted on neighbouring White Communities, or on the territories of great native powers, on which the Government had not dared to infringe to any marked degree, such as those of Lo Bengula's people in the north. But wheresoever on the State's borders there had been no white Power to limit its advances, or where the native tribes had found themselves too isolated or too weak to resist aggressions, there the Republic had by degrees encroached, and extended the shadow, if not the substance, of its authority.

The Transvaal has a boundary line of over 1600 miles in circumference, and of this a large portion is disputed by different native tribes. Speaking generally, the territory lies between the 22° and 28° of South Latitude and the 25° and 32° of East Longitude, or between the Orange Free State, Natal and Griqualand West on the south, and the Limpopo River on the north; and between the Lebombo mountains on the east, and the Kalihari desert on the west. On the north of its territory live three great tribes—the Makalaka, the Matabele, (descendants of the Zulus who deserted Chaka under Mosilikatze), and the Matyana. These tribes are all warlike. On the west, following

the line down to the Diamond Field territory, are the Sicheli, the Bangoaketsi, the Baralong, and the Koranna tribes. Passing round by Griqualand West, the Free State, and Natal, we reach Zululand on the south-east corner; then come the Lebombo mountains on the east, separating the Transvaal from Amatonga land, and from the so-called Portuguese possessions, which are entirely in the hands of native tribes, most of them subject to the great Zulu chief, Umzeila, who has his stronghold in the north-east.

It will be observed that the country is almost surrounded by native tribes. Besides these there are about one million native inhabitants living within its borders. In one district alone, Zoutpansberg, it is computed that there are 364,250 natives, as compared to about 750 whites.

If a beautiful and fertile country were alone necessary to make a state and its inhabitants happy and prosperous, happiness and prosperity would rain upon the Transvaal and the Dutch Boers. The capabilities of this favoured land are vast and various. Within its borders are to be found highlands and lowlands, vast stretches of rolling veldt like gigantic sheep downs, hundreds of miles of swelling bushland, huge tracts of mountainous country, and even little glades spotted with timber that remind one of an English park. There is every possible variety of soil and scenery. Some districts will grow all tropical produce, whilst others are well suited for breeding sheep, cattle, and horses. Most of the districts will produce wheat and all other cereals in greater perfection and abundance than any of the other South African colonies. Two crops of cereals may be

obtained from the soil every year, and both the vine and tobacco are cultivated with great success. Coffee, sugar-cane, and cotton have been grown with profit in the northern parts of the State. Also the undeveloped mineral wealth of the country is very great. Its known minerals are gold, copper, lead, cobalt, iron, coal, tin, and plumbago: copper and iron having long been worked by the natives. Altogether there is little doubt that the Transvaal is the richest of all the South African states, and had it remained under English rule it would, with the aid of English enterprise and capital, have become a very wealthy and prosperous country. However there is little chance of that now.

Perhaps the greatest charm of the Transvaal lies in its climate, which is among the best in the world, and in all the southern districts very healthy. During the winter months—that is, from April to October—little or no rain falls, and the climate is cold and bracing. In summer it is rather warm, but not overpoweringly hot, the thermometer at Pretoria averaging from 65° to 73° and in the winter from 59° to 65°. The population of the Transvaal is estimated at about 40,000 whites, mostly of Dutch origin, consisting of about thirty vast families; and one million natives. There are several towns, the largest of which are Pretoria and Potchefstroom.

Such is the country that we annexed in 1877, and were drummed out of in 1881. Now let us turn to its inhabitants. It has been the fashion to talk of the Transvaal as though nobody but Boers lived in it. In reality the inhabitants were divided into three classes: 1. Natives; 2. Boers; 3. English. I say were divided, because the English class can now

hardly be said to exist, the country having been made too hot to hold it since the war. The natives stand in the proportion of nearly twenty to one to the whites. The Boers were in their turn much more numerous than the English, but the latter owned nearly all the trading establishments in the country, and also a very large amount of property.

The Transvaal Boers have been very much praised up by members of the Government in England, and others who are anxious to advance their interests, as against English interests. Mr. Gladstone, indeed, can hardly find words strong enough to express his admiration of their leaders, those "able men," since they inflicted a national humiliation on us; and doubtless they are a people with many good points. That they are not devoid of sagacity can be seen by the way they have dealt with the English Government.

The Boers are certainly a peculiar people, though they can hardly be said to be "zealous of good works." They are very religious, but their religion takes its colour from the darkest portions of the Old Testament; lessons of mercy and gentleness are not at all to their liking, and they seldom care to read the Gospels. What they delight in are the stories of wholesale butchery by the Israelites of old; and in their own position they find a reproduction of that of the first settlers in the Holy Land. Like them they think they are entrusted by the Almighty with the task of exterminating the heathen native tribes around them, and are always ready with a scriptural precedent for slaughter and robbery. The name of the Divinity is continually on their lips, sometimes in connection with very doubtful statements. They are divided

into three sects, none of which care much for the other two. These are the Doppers, who number about half the population, the Orthodox Reform, and the Liberal Reform, which is the least numerous. Of these three sects the Doppers are by far the most uncompromising and difficult to deal with. They much resemble the Puritans of Charles the First's time, of the extreme Hew-Agag-in-pieces stamp.

It is difficult to agree with those who call the Boers cowards, an accusation which the whole of their history belies. A Boer does not like fighting if he can avoid it, because he sets a high value on his own life; but if he is cornered, he will fight as well as anybody else. The Boers fought well enough in the late war, though that, it is true, is no great criterion of courage, since they were throughout flushed with victory, and, owing to the poor shooting of the British troops, in but little personal danger. One very unpleasant characteristic they have, and that is an absence of regard for the truth, especially where land is concerned. Indeed the national characteristic is crystallised into a proverb, "I am no slave to my word." It has several times happened to me to see one set of highly respectable witnesses in a land case go into the box and swear distinctly that they saw a beacon placed on a certain spot, whilst an equal number on the other side will swear that they saw it placed a mile away. Filled as they are with a land hunger, to which that of the Irish peasant is a weak and colourless sentiment, there is little that they will not do to gratify their taste. It is the subject of constant litigation amongst them, and it is by no means uncommon for a Boer to spend several thousand

pounds in lawsuits over a piece of land not worth as many hundreds.

Personally Boers are fine men, but as a rule ugly. Their women-folk are good-looking in early life, but get very stout as they grow older. They, in common with most of their sex, understand how to use their tongues; indeed, it is said that it was the women who caused the rising against the English Government. None of the refinements of civilisation enter into the life of an ordinary Transvaal Boer. He lives in a way that would shock an English labourer at twenty-five shillings the week, although he is very probably worth fifteen or twenty thousand pounds. His home is but too frequently squalid and filthy to an extraordinary degree. He himself has no education, and does not care that his children should receive any. He lives by himself in the middle of a great plot of land, his nearest neighbour being perhaps ten or twelve miles away, caring but little for the news of the outside world and nothing for its opinions, doing very little work, but growing daily richer through the increase of his flocks and herds. His expenses are almost nothing, and as he gets older wealth increases upon him. The events in his life consist of an occasional trip on "commando" against some native tribe, attending a few political meetings, and the journeys he makes with his family to the nearest town, some four times a year, in order to be present at "Nachtmaal" or communion. Foreigners, especially Englishmen, he detests, but he is kindly and hospitable to his own people. Living isolated as he does, the lord of a little kingdom, he naturally comes to have a great idea of himself, and a corresponding contempt for all the rest of mankind.

Laws and taxes are things distasteful to him, and he looks upon it as an impertinence that any court should venture to call him to account for his doings. He is rich and prosperous, and the cares of poverty, and all the other troubles that fall to the lot of civilised men, do not affect him. He has no romance in him, nor any of the higher feelings and aspirations that are found in almost every other race; in short, unlike the Zulu he despises, there is little of the gentleman in his composition, though he is at times capable of acts of kindness and even generosity. His happiness is to live alone in the great wilderness, with his children, his men-servants, and his maid-servants, his flocks and his herds, the monarch of all he surveys. If civilisation presses him too closely, his remedy is a simple one. He sells his farm, packs up his goods and cash in his waggon, and starts for regions more congenially wild. Such are some of the leading characteristics of that remarkable product of South Africa, the Transvaal Boer, who resembles no other white man in the world.

Perhaps, however, the most striking of all his oddities is his abhorrence of all government, more especially if that government be carried out according to English principles. The Boers have always been more or less in rebellion; they rebelled against the rule of the Company when the Cape belonged to Holland, they rebelled against the English Government in the Cape, they were always in a state of semi-rebellion against their own Government in the Transvaal, and now they have for the second time, with the most complete success, rebelled against the English Government. The fact of the matter is that the bulk of their number hate all Governments, because Govern-

ments enforce law and order, and they hate the English Government worst of all because it enforces law and order most of all. It is not liberty they long for, but license. The "sturdy independence" of the Boer resolves itself into a determination not to have his affairs interfered with by any superior power whatsoever, and not to pay taxes if he can possibly avoid it. But he has also a specific cause of complaint against the English Government, which would alone cause him to do his utmost to get rid of it, and that is its mode of dealing with natives, which is radically opposite to his own. This is the secret of Boer patriotism. To understand it, it must be remembered that the Englishman and the Boer look at natives from a very different point of view. The Englishman, though he may not be very fond of him, at any rate regards the Kafir as a fellow human being with feelings like his own. The average Boer does not. He looks upon the "black creature" as having been delivered into his hand by the "Lord" for his own purposes, that is, to shoot and enslave. He must not be blamed too harshly for this, for, besides being naturally of a somewhat hard disposition, hatred of the native is hereditary, and is partly induced by the history of many a bloody struggle. Also the native hates the Boer fully as much as the Boer hates the native, though with better reason. Now native labour is a necessity to the Boer, because he will not as a rule do hard manual labour himself, and there must be some one to plant and garner the crops and herd the cattle. On the other hand, the natives are not anxious to serve the Boers, which means little or no pay and plenty of thick stick, and sometimes worse. The

result of this state of affairs is that the Boer often has to rely on forced labour to a very great extent. But this is a thing that an English Government will not tolerate, and the consequence is that under its rule he cannot get the labour that is necessary to him.

Then there is the tax question. If he lives under the English flag the money has to be paid regularly, but under his own Government he pays or not as he likes. It was this habit of his of refusing payment of taxes that brought the Republic into difficulties in 1877, and that will ere long bring it into trouble again. He cannot understand that cash is necessary to carry on a Government, and looks upon a tax as though it were so much money stolen from him. These things are the real springs of the "sturdy independence" and the patriotism of the ordinary Transvaal farmer. Doubtless there are some who are really patriotic; for instance, one of their leaders, Paul Kruger. But with the majority, patriotism is only another word for unbounded license and forced labour.

These remarks must not be taken to apply to the Cape Boers, who are a superior class of men, since they, living under a settled and civilised Government, have been steadily improving, whilst their cousins, living every man for his own hand, have been deteriorating. The old Voortrekkers, the fathers and grandfathers of the Transvaal Boer of to-day, were, without doubt, a very fine set of men, and occasionally you may in the Transvaal meet individuals of the same stamp whom it is a pleasure to know. But these are generally men of a certain age, with some experience of the world; the younger men are very objectionable in their manners.

The real Dutch Patriotic party is not to be found in the Transvaal, but in the Cape Colony. Their object, which, as affairs now are, is well within the bounds of possibility, is by fair means or foul to swamp the English element in South Africa, and to establish a great Dutch Republic. It was this party, which consists of clever and well educated men, who raised the outcry against the Transvaal Annexation, because it meant an enormous extension of English influence, and who had the wit, by means of their emissaries and newspapers, to work upon the feeling of the ignorant Transvaal farmers until they persuaded them to rebel; and finally, to avail themselves of the yearnings of English radicalism for the disruption of the Empire and the minimisation of British authority, to get the Annexation cancelled. All through this business the Boers have more or less danced in obedience to strings pulled at Cape Town, and it is now said that one of the chief wire-pullers, Mr. Hofmeyer, is to be asked to become President of the Republic. These men are the real patriots of South Africa, and very clever ones too—not the Transvaal Boers, who vapour about their blood and their country and the accursed Englishman to order, and are in reality influenced by very small motives, such as the desire to avoid payment of taxes, or to hunt away a neighbouring Englishman, whose civilisation and refinement are as offensive as his farm is desirable. Such are the Dutch inhabitants of the Transvaal. I will now give a short sketch of their institutions as they were before the Annexation, and to which the community has reverted since its recision, with, I believe, but few alterations.

The form of government is republican, and to all intents and purposes manhood suffrage prevails, supreme power resting in the people. The executive power of the State centres in a President elected by the people to hold office for a term of five years, every voter having a voice in his election. He is assisted in the execution of his duties by an Executive Council, consisting of the State Secretary and such other three members as are selected for that purpose by the legislative body, the Volksraad. The State Secretary holds office for four years, and is elected by the Volksraad. The members of the Executive have all seats in the Volksraad, but have no votes. The Volksraad is the legislative body of the State, and consists of forty-two members. The country is divided into twelve electoral districts, each of which has the right to return three members; the Gold Fields have also the right of electing two members, and the four principal towns one member each. There is no power in the State competent to either prorogue or dissolve the Volksraad except that body itself, so that an appeal to the country on a given subject or policy is impossible without its concurrence. Members are elected for four years, but half retire by rotation every two years, the vacancies being filled by re-elections. Members must have been voters for three years, and be not less than thirty years of age, must belong to a Protestant Church, be resident in the country, and owners of immovable property therein. A father and son cannot sit in the same Raad, neither can seats be occupied by coloured persons, bastards, or officials.

For each electoral district there is a magistrate or Landdrost, whose duties are similar to those of a Civil

Commissioner. These districts are again subdivided into wards presided over by field cornets, who exercise judicial powers in minor matters, and in times of war have considerable authority. The Roman Dutch law is the common law of the country, as it is of the colonies of the Cape of Good Hope and Natal, and of the Orange Free State.

Prior to the Annexation justice was administered in a very primitive fashion. First, there was the Landdrosts' Court, from which an appeal lay to a court consisting of the Landdrost and six councillors elected by the public. This was a court of first instance as well as a court of appeal. Then there was a Supreme Court, consisting of three Landdrosts from three different districts, and a jury of twelve selected from the burghers of the State. There was no appeal from this court, but cases have sometimes been brought under the consideration of the Volksraad as the supreme power. It is easy to imagine what the administration of justice was like when the presidents of all the law courts in the country were elected by the mob, not on account of their knowledge of the law, but because they were popular. Suitors before the old Transvaal courts found the law surprisingly uncertain. A High Court of Justice was, however, established after the Annexation, and has been continued by the Volksraad, but an agitation is being got up against it, and it will possibly be abolished in favour of the old system.

In such a community as that of the Transvaal Boers the question of public defence was evidently of the first importance. This is provided for under what is known as the Commando system. The President,

with the concurrence of the Executive Council, has the right of declaring war, and of calling up a commando, in which the burghers are placed under the field cornets and commandants. These last are chosen by the field cornets for each district, and a Commandant-general is chosen by the whole laager or force, but the President is the Commander-in-Chief of the army. All the inhabitants of the State between sixteen and sixty, with a few exceptions, are liable for service. Young men under eighteen, and men over fifty, are only called out under circumstances of emergency. Members of the Volksraad, officials, clergymen, and school-teachers are exempt from personal service, unless martial law is proclaimed, but must contribute an amount not exceeding £15 towards the expense of the war. All legal proceedings in civil cases are suspended against persons on commando, no summonses can be made out, and as soon as martial law is proclaimed no legal execution can be prosecuted, the pounds are closed, and transfer dues payments are suspended until after thirty days from the recall of the proclamation of martial law. Owners of land residing beyond the borders of the Republic are also liable, in addition to the ordinary war tax, to place a fit and proper substitute at the disposal of the Government, or otherwise to pay a fine of £15. The first levy of the burghers is, of men from eighteen to thirty-four years of age; the second, thirty-four to fifty; and the third, from sixteen to eighteen, and from fifty to sixty years. Every man is bound to provide himself with clothing, a gun, and ammunition, and there must be enough waggons and oxen found between them to suffice for their joint use. Of the

booty taken, one quarter goes to Government, and the rest to the burghers. The most disagreeable part of the commandeering system is, however, yet to come; personal service is not all that the resident in the Transvaal Republic has to endure. The right is vested in field cornets to commandeer articles as well as individuals, and to call upon inhabitants to furnish requisites for the commando. As may be imagined, it goes very hard on these occasions with the property of any individual whom the field cornet may not happen to like.

Each ward is expected to turn out its contingent ready and equipped for war, and this can only be done by seizing goods right and left. One unfortunate will have to find a waggon, another to deliver over his favourite span of trek oxen, another his riding-horse or some slaughter cattle, and so on. Even when the officer making the levy is desirous of doing his duty as fairly as he can, it is obvious that very great hardships must be inflicted under such a system. Requisitions are made more with regard to what is wanted than with a view to an equitable distribution of demands; and like the Jews in the time of the Crusades, he who has got most must pay most, or take the consequences, which may be unpleasant. Articles which are not perishable, such as waggons, are supposed to be returned, but if they come back at all they are generally worthless.

In case of war, the native tribes living within the borders of the State are also expected to furnish contingents, and it is on them that most of the hard work of the campaign generally falls. They are put in the front of the battle, and have to do the hand-

to-hand fighting, which, however, if of the Zulu race, they do not object to.

The revenue of the State is so arranged that the burden of it should fall as much as possible on the trading community, and as little as possible on the farmer. It is chiefly derived from licenses on trades, professions, and callings, 30s. per annum quit-rent on farms, transfer dues and stamps, auction dues, court fees, and contributions from such native tribes as can be made to pay them. Since we have given up the country, the Volksraad has put a very heavy tax on all imported goods, hoping thereby to beguile the Boers into paying taxes without knowing it, and at the same time strike a blow at the trading community, which is English in its proclivities. The result has been to paralyse what little trade there was left in the country, and to cause great dissatisfaction amongst the farmers, who cannot understand why, now that the English are gone, they should have to pay twice as much for their sugar and coffee as they have been accustomed to do.

I will conclude this chapter with a few words about the natives who swarm in and around the Transvaal. They can be roughly divided into two great races, the Amazulu and their offshoots, and the Macatee or Basuto tribes. All those of Zulu blood, including the Swazis, Mapock's Kafirs, the Matabele, the Knob-noses, and others are very warlike in disposition, and men of fine physique. The Basutos (who must not be confounded with the Cape Basutos), however, differ from these tribes in every respect, including their language, which is called Sisutu, the only mutual feeling between the two races being their common detestation

of the Boers. They do not love war; in fact, they are timid and cowardly by nature, and only fight when they are obliged to. Unlike the Zulus, they are much addicted to the arts of peace, show considerable capacities for civilisation, and are even willing to become Christians. There would have been a far better field for the Missionary in the Transvaal than in Zululand and Natal. Indeed, the most successful mission station I have seen in Africa is near Middleburg, under the control of Mr. Merensky. In person the Basutos are thin and weakly when compared to the stalwart Zulu, and it is their consciousness of inferiority both to the white men and their black brethren that, together with their natural timidity, makes them submit as easily as they do to the yoke of the Boer.

CHAPTER II

EVENTS PRECEDING THE ANNEXATION.

In or about the year 1872, the burghers of the Republic elected Mr. Burgers their President. This remarkable man was a native of the Cape Colony, and passed the first sixteen or seventeen years of his life, he once informed me, on a farm herding sheep. He afterwards became a clergyman noted for the eloquence of his preaching, but his ideas proving too broad for his congregation, he resigned his cure, and in an evil moment for himself took to politics.

President Burgers was a man of striking presence and striking talents, especially as regards his oratory, which was really of a very high class, and would have commanded attention in our own House of Commons. He possessed, however, a mind of that peculiarly volatile order that is sometimes met with in conjunction with great talents, and which seems to be entirely without ballast. His intellect was of a balloon-like nature, and as incapable of being steered. He was always soaring in the clouds, and, as is natural to one in that elevated position, taking a very different and more sanguine view of affairs to that which men of a more lowly, and perhaps a more practical, turn of mind would do.

But notwithstanding his fly-away ideas, President Burgers was undoubtedly a true patriot, labouring night and day for the welfare of the State of which he had undertaken the guidance; but his patriotism was too exalted for his surroundings. He wished to elevate to the rank of a nation a people who had not got the desire to be elevated; with this view he contracted railway loans, made wars, minted gold, &c., and then suddenly discovered that the country refused to support him. In short, he was made of very different clay to that of the people he had to do with. He dreamt of a great Dutch Republic "with eight millions of inhabitants," doing a vast trade with the interior through the Delagoa Bay Railway. They, on the other hand, cared nothing about republics or railways, but fixed their affections on forced labour and getting rid of the necessity of paying taxes—and so between them the Republic came to grief. But it must be borne in mind that President Burgers was throughout actuated by good motives; he did his best by a stubborn and a stiff-necked people; and if he failed, as fail he did, it was more their fault than his. As regards the pension he received from the English Government, which has so often been brought up against him, it was after all no more than his due after five years of arduous work. If the Republic had continued to exist, it is to be presumed that they would have made some provision for their old President, more especially as he seems to have exhausted his private means in paying the debts of the country. Whatever may be said of some of the other officials of the Republic, its President was, I believe, an honest man.

In 1875, Mr. Burgers proceeded to Europe, having, he says in a posthumous document recently published,

been empowered by the Volksraad "to carry out my plans for the development of the country, by opening up a direct communication for it, free from the trammels of British ports and influence." According to this document, during his absence two powerful parties, viz., "the faction of unprincipled fortune-hunters, rascals, and runaways on the one hand, and the faction of the extreme orthodox party in a certain branch of the Dutch Reform Church on the other, began to co-operate against the Government of the Republic and me personally. . . . . Ill as I was, and contrary to the advice of my medical men, I proceeded to Europe, in the beginning of 1875, to carry out my project, and no sooner was my back turned on the Transvaal than the conspiring elements began to act. The new coat of arms and flag adopted in the Raad by an almost unanimous vote were abolished; the laws for a free and secular education were tampered with; and my resistance to a reckless inspection and disposal of Government lands, still occupied by natives, was openly defied. The Raad, filled up to a large extent with men of ill repute, who, under the cloak of progress and favour to the Government view, obtained their seats, was too weak to cope with the skill of the conspirators, and granted leave to the acting President to carry out measures diametrically opposed to my policy. *Native lands* were inspected and given out to a few speculators, who held large numbers of claims to lands which were destined for citizens, and so a war was prepared for me, on my return from Europe, which I could not avert." This extract is interesting, as showing the state of feeling existing between the President and his officers previous to the outbreak of the Secocœni war. It also shows

how entirely he was out of sympathy with the citizens, seeing that, as soon as his back was turned, they, with Mr. Joubert and Paul Kruger at their head, at once undid all the little good he had done.

When Mr. Burgers got to England, he found that city capitalists would have nothing whatever to say to his railway scheme. In Holland, however, he succeeded in getting £90,000 of the £300,000 he wished to borrow at a high rate of interest, and by passing a bond on five hundred Government farms. This money was immediately invested in railway plant, which, when it arrived at Delagoa Bay, had to be mortgaged to pay the freight on it, and that was the end of the Delagoa Bay railway scheme, except that the £90,000 is, I believe, still owing to the confiding shareholders in Holland.

On his return to the Transvaal the President was well received, and for a month or so all went smoothly. But the relations of the Republic with the surrounding native tribes had by this time become so bad that an explosion was imminent somewhere. In the year 1874 the Volksraad raised the price of passes under the iniquitous pass law, by which every native travelling through the territory was made to pay from £1 to £5. In case of non-payment the native was made subject to a fine of from £1 to £10, and to a beating of from "ten to twenty-five lashes." He was also to go into service for three months, and have a certificate thereof, for which he must pay five shillings; the avowed object of the law being to obtain a supply of Kafir labour. This was done in spite of the earnest protest of the President, who gave the Raad distinctly to understand that by accepting this law they would, in point of fact, annul

treaties concluded with the chiefs on the south-western borders. It is not clear, however, if this amended pass law ever came into force. It is to be hoped it did not, for even under the old law natives were shamefully treated by Boers, who would pretend that they were authorised by Government to collect the tax; the result being that the unfortunate Kafir was frequently obliged to pay twice over. Natives had such a horror of the pass laws of the country, that when travelling to the Diamond Fields to work they would frequently go round some hundreds of miles rather than pass through the Transvaal.

That the Volksraad should have thought it necessary to enact such a law in order that the farmers should obtain a supply of Kafir labour in a territory that had nearly a million of native inhabitants, who, unlike the Zulus, are willing to work if only they meet with decent treatment, is in itself an instructive commentary on the feelings existing between Boer master and Kafir servant.

But besides the general quarrel with the Kafir race in its entirety, which the Boers always have on hand, they had just then several individual differences, in each of which there lurked the possibilities of disturbance.

To begin with, their relations with Cetywayo were by no means amicable. During Mr. Burgers' absence the Boer Government, then under the leadership of P. J. Joubert, sent Cetywayo a very stern message—a message that gives the reader the idea that Mr. Joubert was ready to enforce it with ten thousand men. After making various statements and demands with reference to the Amaswazi tribe, the disputed boundary line, &c., it ends thus:—

"Although the Government of the South African Republic has never wished, and does not now desire, that serious disaffection and animosities should exist between you and them, yet it is not the less of the greatest consequence and importance for you earnestly to weigh these matters and risks, and to satisfy them; the more so, if you on your side also wish that peace and friendship shall be maintained between you and us."

The Secretary for Native Affairs for Natal comments on this message in these words: "The tone of this message to Cetywayo is not very friendly, it has the look of an ultimatum, and if the Government of the Transvaal were in circumstances different to what it is, the message would suggest an intention to coerce if the demands it conveys are not at once complied with; but I am inclined to the opinion that no such intention exists, and that the transmission of a copy of the message to the Natal Government is intended as a notification that the Transvaal Government has proclaimed the territory hitherto in dispute between it and the Zulus to be Republican territory, and that the Republic intends to occupy it."

In the territories marked out by a decision known as the Keate Award, in which Lieutenant-Governor Keate of Natal, at the request of both parties, laid down the boundary line between the Boers and certain native tribes, the Boer Government carried it with a yet higher hand, insomuch as the natives of those districts, being comparatively unwarlike, were less likely to resist.

On the 18th August 1875, Acting President Joubert issued a proclamation by which a line was laid down far to the southward of that marked out by Mr. Keate,

and consequently included more territory within the elastic boundaries of the Republic. A Government notice of the same date invites all claiming lands now declared to belong to the Republic to send in their claims to be settled by a land commission.

On the 6th March 1876, another chief in the same neighbourhood (Montsoia) writes to the Lieutenant-Governor of Griqualand West in these terms:—

"MY FRIEND,—I wish to acquaint you with the doings of some people connected with the Boers. A man-servant of mine has been severely injured in the head by one of the Boers' servants, which has proved fatal. Another of my people has been cruelly treated by a Boer tying a rein about his neck, and then mounting his horse and dragging him about the place. My brother Molema, who is the bearer of this, will give you full particulars."

Molema explains the assaults thus: "The assaulted man is not dead; his skull was fractured. The assault was committed by a Boer named Wessels Badenhorst, who shamefully ill-treated the man, beat him till he fainted, and, on his revival, fastened a rim round his neck, and made him run to the homestead by the side of his (Badenhorst's) horse cantering. At the homestead he tied him to the waggon-wheel, and flogged him again till Mrs. Badenhorst stopped her husband."

Though it will be seen that the Boers were on good terms neither with the Zulus nor the Keate Award natives, they still had one Kafir ally, namely, Umbandeni, the Amaswazi king. This alliance was concluded under circumstances so peculiar that they are worthy of a brief recapitulation. It appears that in the winter of the year 1875, Mr. Rudolph, the Land-

drost of Utrecht, went to Swaziland, and, imitating the example of the Natal Government with Cetywayo, crowned Umbandeni king, on behalf of the Boer Government. He further made a treaty of alliance with him, and promised him a commando to help him in case of his being attacked by the Zulus. Now comes the curious part of the story. On the 18th May 1876, a message came from this same Umbandeni to Sir H. Bulwer, of which the following is an extract:—"We are sent by our king to thank the Government of Natal for the information sent to him last winter by that Government, and conveyed by Mr. Rudolph, of the intended attack on his people by the Zulus. We are further instructed by the king to thank the Natal Government for the influence it used to stop the intended raid, and for instructing a Boer commando to go to his country to render him assistance in case of need; and further for appointing Mr. Rudolph at the head of the commando to place him (Umbandeni) as king over the Amaswazi, and to make a treaty with him and his people on behalf of the Natal Government. . . . The Transvaal Government has asked Umbandeni to acknowledge himself a subject of the Republic, but he has distinctly refused to do so." In a minute written on this subject, the Secretary for Native Affairs for Natal says, "No explanation or assurance from me was sufficient to convince them (Umbandeni's messengers) that they had on that occasion made themselves subjects of the South African Republic; they declared it was not their wish or intention to do so, and that they would refuse to acknowledge a position into which they had been unwittingly betrayed." I must

conclude this episode by quoting the last paragraph of Sir H. Bulwer's covering despatch, because it concerns larger issues than the supposed treaty: "It will not be necessary that I should at present add any remarks to those contained in the minute of the Secretary for Native Affairs, but I would observe that the situation arising out of the relations of the Government of the South African Republic with the neighbouring native States is so complicated, and presents so many elements of confusion and of danger to the peace of this portion of South Africa, that I trust some way may be found to an early settlement of questions that ought not, in my opinion, to be left alone, as so many have been left, to take the chance of the future."

And now I come to the last and most imminent native difficulty that at the time faced the Republic. On the borders of Lydenburg district there lived a powerful chief named Secocoeni. Between this chief and the Transvaal Government difficulties arose in the beginning of 1876 on the usual subject—land. The Boers declared that they had bought the land from the Swazis, who had conquered portions of the country, and that the Swazis offered to make it "clean from brambles," *i.e.*, kill everybody living on it; but that they (the Boers) said that they were to let them be, that they might be their servants. The Basutos, on the other hand, said that no such sale ever took place, and, even if it did take place, it was invalid, because the Swazis were not in occupation of the land, and therefore could not sell it. It was a Christian Kafir called Johannes, a brother of Secocoeni, who was the immediate cause of the war. This Johannes used to

live at a place called Botsobelo, the mission-station of Mr. Merensky, but moved to a stronghold on the Spekboom river, in the disputed territory. The Boers sent to him to come back, but he refused, and warned the Boers off his land. Secocœni was then appealed to, but declared that the land belonged to his tribe, and would be occupied by Johannes. He also told the Boers "that he did not wish to fight, but that he was quite ready to do so if they preferred it." Thereupon the Transvaal Government declared war, although it does not appear that the natives committed any outrage or acts of hostility before the declaration. As regards the Boers' right to Secocœni's country, Sir H. Barkly sums up the question thus, in a despatch addressed to President Burgers, dated 28th Nov. 1876: —"On the whole, it seems perfectly clear, and I feel bound to repeat it, that Sikukuni was neither *de jure* or *de facto* a subject of the Republic when your Honour declared war against him in June last." As soon as war had been declared, the clumsy commando system was set working, and about 2500 white men collected; the Swazis also were applied to to send a contingent, which they did, being only too glad of the opportunity of slaughter.

At first all went well, and the President, who accompanied the commando in person, succeeded in reducing a mountain stronghold, which, in his high-flown way, he called a "glorious victory" over a "Kafir Gibraltar."

On the 14th July another engagement took place, when the Boers and Swazis attacked Johannes' stronghold. The place was taken with circumstances of great barbarity by the Swazis, for when the signal was given to advance the Boers did not move. Nearly

all the women were killed, and the brains of the children were dashed out against the stones; in one instance, before the captive mother's face. Johannes was badly wounded, and died two days afterwards. When he was dying, he said to his brother, "I am going to die. I am thankful I do not die by the hands of these cowardly Boers, but by the hand of a black and courageous nation like myself . . ." He then took leave of his people, told his brother to read the Bible, and expired. The Swazis were so infuriated at the cowardice displayed by the Boers on this occasion that they returned home in great dudgeon.

On the 2d of August Secocœni's mountain, which is a very strong fortification, was attacked in two columns, or rather an attempt was made to attack it, for when it came to the pinch only about forty men, mostly English and Germans, would advance. Thereupon the whole commando retreated with great haste, the greater part of it going straight home. In vain the President entreated them to shoot him rather than desert him; they had had enough of Secocœni and his stronghold, and home they went. The President then retreated with what few men he had left to Steelport, where he built a fort, and from thence returned to Pretoria. The news of the collapse of the commando was received throughout the Transvaal, and indeed the whole of South Africa, with the greatest dismay. For the first time in the history of that country the white man had been completely worsted by a native tribe, and that tribe wretched Basutos, people whom the Zulus call their "dogs." It was glad tidings to every native from the Zambesi to the Cape, who learnt thereby that the white man was not so invincible as he used to be.

Meanwhile the inhabitants of Lydenburg were filled with alarm, and again and again petitioned the Governors of the Cape and Natal for assistance. Their fears were, however, to a great extent groundless, for, with the exception of occasional cattle-lifting, Secocœni did not follow up his victory.

On the 4th September the President opened the special sitting of the Volksraad, and presented to that body a scheme for the establishment of a border force to take the place of the commando system, announcing that he had appointed a certain Captain Von Schlickmann to command it. He also requested the Raad to make some provision for the expenses of the expedition, which they had omitted to do in their former sitting.

Captain Von Schlickmann determined to carry on the war upon a different system. He got together a band of very rough characters on the Diamond Fields, and occupied the fort built by the President, from whence he would sally out from time to time and destroy kraals. He seems, if we may believe the reports in the blue-books and the stories of eye-witnesses, to have carried on his proceedings in a somewhat savage way. The following is an extract from a private letter written by one of his volunteers:—

"About daylight we came across four Kafirs. Saw them first, and charged in front of them to cut off their retreat. Saw they were women, and called out not to fire. In spite of that, one of the poor things got her head blown off (a d——d shame). . . . Afterwards two women and a baby were brought to the camp prisoners. The same night they were taken out by our Kafirs and murdered in cool blood by order of ——. Mr. —— and myself strongly protested against it, but without

avail. I never heard such a cowardly piece of business in my life. No good will come of it, you may depend. . . . —— says he would cut all the women and children's throats he catches. Told him distinctly he was a d——d coward."

Schlickmann was, however, a mild-mannered man when compared to a certain Abel Erasmus, afterwards denounced at a public dinner by Sir Garnet Wolseley as a fiend "in human form." This gentleman, in the month of October, attacked a friendly kraal of Kafirs. The incident is described thus in a correspondent's letter:—

"The people of the kraals, taken quite by surprise, fled when they saw their foes, and most of them took shelter in the neighbouring bush. Two or three men were distinctly seen in their flight from the kraal, and one of them is known to have been wounded. According to my informant the remainder were women and children, who were pursued into the bush, and there, all shivering and shrieking, were put to death by the Boers' Kafirs, some being shot, but the majority stabbed with assegais. After the massacre he counted thirteen women and three children, but he says he did not see the body of a single man. Another Kafir said, pointing to a place in the road where the stones were thickly strewn, 'the bodies of the women and children lay like these stones.' The Boer before mentioned, who has been stationed outside, has told one of his own friends, whom he thought would not mention it, that the shrieks were fearful to hear."

Several accounts of, or allusion to, this atrocity can be found in the blue-books, and I may add that it, in common with others of the same stamp, was the talk of the country at the time.

I do not relate these horrors out of any wish to rake up old stories to the prejudice of the Boers, but because I am describing the state of the country before the Annexation, in which they form an interesting and important item. Also, it is as well that people in England should know into what hands they have delivered over the native tribes who trusted in their protection. What happened in 1876 is probably happening again now, and will certainly happen again and again. The character of the Transvaal Boer and his sentiments towards the native races have not modified during the last five years, but, on the contrary, a large amount of energy, which has been accumulating during the period of British protection, will now be expended on their devoted heads.

As regards the truth of these atrocities, the majority of them are beyond the possibility of doubt; indeed, to the best of my knowledge, no serious attempt has ever been made to refute such of them as have come into public notice, except in a general way, for party purposes. As, however, they may be doubted, I will quote the following extract from a despatch written by Sir H. Barkly to Lord Carnarvon, dated 18th December 1876:—

"As Von Schlickmann has since fallen fighting bravely, it is not without reluctance that I join in affixing this dark stain on his memory, but truth compels me to add the following extract from a letter which I have since received from one whose name (which I communicate to your Lordship privately) forbids disbelief: 'There is no longer the *slightest doubt* as to the murder of the two women and the child at Steelport by the direct order of Schlickmann, and in

the attack on the kraal near which these women were captured (or some attack about that period) he ordered his men to cut the throats of all the wounded! This is no mere report; it is positively true.'" He concludes by expressing a hope that the course of events will enable Her Majesty's Government to take such steps "as will terminate this wanton and useless bloodshed, and prevent the recurrence of the *scenes of injustice, cruelty, and rapine which abundant evidence is every day forthcoming to prove have rarely ceased to disgrace the Republics beyond the Vaal ever since they first sprang into existence*."[1]

These are strong words, but none too strong for the facts of the case. Injustice, cruelty, and rapine have always been the watchwords of the Transvaal Boers. The stories of wholesale slaughter in the earlier days of the Republic are very numerous. One of the best known of those shocking occurrences took place in the Zoutpansberg war in 1865. On this occasion a large number of Kafirs took refuge in caves, where the Boers smoked them to death. Some years afterwards Dr. Wangeman, whose account is, I believe, thoroughly reliable, describes the scene of their operations in these words:—

"The roof of the first cave was black with smoke; the remains of the logs which were burnt lay at the entrance. The floor was strewn with hundreds of skulls and skeletons. In confused heaps lay karosses, kerries, assegais, pots, spoons, snuff-boxes, and the bones of men, giving one the impression that this was the grave of a whole people. Some estimate the number of those who perished here from twenty to thirty thousand. This

[1] The italics are my own.—AUTHOR.

is, I believe, too high. In the one chamber there were from two hundred to three hundred skeletons; the other chambers I did not visit."

In 1868 a public meeting was held at Potchefstroom to consider the war then going on with the Zoutpansberg natives. According to the report of the proceedings, the Rev. Mr. Ludorf said that "on a particular occasion a number of native children, who were too young to be removed, had been collected in a heap, covered with long grass, and burned alive. Other atrocities had also been committed, but these were too horrible to relate." When called upon to produce his authority for this statement, Mr. Ludorf named his authority "in a solemn declaration to the State Attorney." At this same meeting Mr. J. G. Steyn, who had been Landdrost of Potchefstroom, said, "there now was innocent blood on our hands which had not yet been avenged, and the curse of God rested on the land in consequence." Mr. Rosalt remarked that "it was a singular circumstance that in the different colonial Kafir wars, as also in the Basuto wars, one did not hear of destitute children being found by the commandoes, and asked how it was that every petty commando that took the field in this Republic invariably found numbers of destitute children. He gave it as his opinion that the present system of apprenticeship was an essential cause of our frequent hostilities with the natives." Mr. Jan Talyard said, "Children were forcibly taken from their parents, and were then called destitute and apprenticed." Mr. Daniel Van Nooren was heard to say, "If they had to clear the country, and could not have the children they found, he would shoot them." Mr. Field-Cornet Furstenburg stated "that when he

was at Zoutpansberg with his burghers, the chief Katse-Kats was told to come down from the mountains; that he sent one of his subordinates as a proof of amity; that whilst a delay of five days was guaranteed by Commandant Paul Kruger, who was then in command, orders were given at the same time to attack the natives at break of day, which was accordingly done, but which resulted in total failure." Truly, this must have been an interesting meeting.

Before leaving these unsavoury subjects, I must touch on the question of slavery. It has been again and again denied, on behalf of the Transvaal Boers, that slavery existed in the Republic. Now, this is, strictly speaking, true; slavery did not exist, but apprenticeship did—the rose was called by another name, that is all. The poor destitute children who were picked up by kind-hearted Boers, after the extermination of their parents, were apprenticed to farmers till they came of age. It is a remarkable fact that these children never attained their majority. You might meet oldish men in the Transvaal who were not, according to their masters' reckoning, twenty-one years of age. The assertion that slavery did not exist in the Transvaal is only made to hoodwink the English public. I have known men who have owned slaves, and who have seen whole waggon-loads of "black ivory," as they were called, sold for about £15 a-piece. I have at this moment a tenant, Carolus by name, on some land I own in Natal, now a well-to-do man, who was for many years—about twenty, if I remember right—a Boer slave. During those years, he told me, he worked from morning till night, and the only reward he received was two calves. He finally escaped into Natal.

If other evidence is needed it is not difficult to find, so I will quote a little. On the 22d August 1876 we find Khama, king of the Bamangwato, one of the most worthy chiefs in South Africa, sending a message to "Victoria, the great Queen of the English people," in these words:—

"I write to you, Sir Henry, in order that your Queen may preserve for me my country, it being in her hands. The Boers are coming into it, and I do not like them. Their actions are cruel among us black people. We are like money, they sell us and our children. I ask Her Majesty to pity me, and to hear that which I write quickly. I wish to hear upon what conditions Her Majesty will receive me, and my country and my people, under her protection. I am weary with fighting. I do not like war, and I ask Her Majesty to give me peace. I am very much distressed that my people are being destroyed by war, and I wish them to obtain peace. I ask Her Majesty to defend me, as she defends all her people. There are three things which distress me very much—war, selling people, and drink. All these things I shall find in the Boers, and it is these things which destroy people to make an end of them in the country. *The custom of the Boers has always been to cause people to be sold, and to-day they are still selling people.* Last year I saw them pass with two waggons full of people whom they had bought at the river at Tanane" (Lake Ngate).

The Special Correspondent of the *Cape Argus*, a highly respectable journal, writes thus on the 28th November 1876:—"The Boer from whom this information was gleaned has furnished besides some facts which may not be uninteresting, as a commentary on

the repeated denials by Mr. Burgers of the existence of slavery. During the last week slaves have been offered for sale on his farm. The captives have been taken from Secocœni's country by Mapoch's people, and are being exchanged at the rate of a child for a heifer. He also assures us that the whole of the High-veld is being replenished with Kafir children, whom the Boers have been lately purchasing from the Swazis at the rate of a horse for a child. I should like to see this man and his father as witnesses before an Imperial Commission. He let fall one or two incidents of the past which were brought to mind by the occurrences of the present. In 1864, he says, 'The Swazis accompanied the Boers against Males. The Boers did nothing but stand by and witness the fearful massacre. The men and women were also murdered. One poor woman sat clutching her baby of eight days old. The Swazis stabbed her through the body, and when she found that she could not live, she wrung the baby's neck with her own hands to save it from future misery. On the return of that commando the children who became too weary to continue the journey were killed on the road. The survivors were sold as slaves to the farmers.'"

The same gentleman writes in the issue of the 12th December as follows:—"The whole world may know it, for it is true, and investigation will only bring out the horrible details, that through the whole course of this Republic's existence it has acted in contravention of the Sand River Treaty; and slavery has occurred not only here and there in isolated cases, but as an unbroken practice, and has been one of the peculiar institutions of the country, mixed up with all its social and political life. It has been at the root of most of

its wars. It has been carried on regularly even in times of peace. It has been characterised by all those circumstances which have so often roused the British nation to an indignant protest, and to repeated efforts to banish the slave trade from the world. The Boers have not only fallen on unsuspecting kraals simply for the purpose of obtaining the women and children and cattle, but they have carried on a traffic through natives who have kidnapped the children of their weaker neighbours, and sold them to the white man. Again, the Boers have sold and exchanged their victims among themselves. Waggon-loads of slaves have been conveyed from one end of the country to the other for sale, and that with the cognisance of, and for the direct advantage of, the highest officials of the land. The writer has himself seen in a town, situated in the south of the Republic, the children who had been brought down from a remote northern district. One fine morning, in walking through the streets, he was struck with the number of little black strangers standing about certain houses, and wondered where they could have come from. He learnt a few hours later that they were part of loads which were disposed of on the outskirts of the town the day before. The circumstances connected with some of these kidnapping excursions are appalling, and the barbarities practised by cruel masters upon some of these defenceless creatures during the course of their servitude are scarcely less horrible than those reported from Turkey. It is no disgrace in this country for an official to ride a fine horse which was got for two Kafir children, to procure whom the father and mother were shot. No reproach is inherited by the mistress who, day after day, tied up her female

servant in an agonising posture, and had her beaten until there was no sound part in her body, securing her in the stocks during the intervals of torture. That man did not lose caste who tied up another woman and had her thrashed until she brought forth at the whipping-post. These are merely examples of thousands of cases which could be proved were an Imperial Commission to sit, and could the wretched victims of a prolonged oppression recover sufficiently from the dread of their old tyrants to give a truthful report."

To come to some evidence more recently adduced. On the 9th May 1881, an affidavit was sworn to by the Rev. John Thorne, curate of St. John the Evangelist, Lydenburg, Transvaal, and presented to the Royal Commission appointed to settle Transvaal affairs, in which he states:—"That I was appointed to the charge of a congregation in Potchefstroom, about thirteen years ago, when the Republic was under the presidency of Mr. Pretorius.[1] I remember noticing one morning, as I walked through the streets, a number of young natives, whom I knew to be strangers. I inquired where they came from. I was told that they had just been brought from Zoutpansberg. This was the locality from which slaves were chiefly brought at that time, and were traded for under the name of 'Black Ivory.' One of these natives belonged to Mr. Munich, the State Attorney. It was a matter of common remark at that time that the President of the Republic was himself one of the greatest dealers in slaves." In the fourth paragraph of the same affidavit Mr. Thorne says, "That the Rev. Doctor Nachtigal, of the Berlin Missionary Society, was the interpreter for Shatane's people in the

[1] One of the famous Triumvirate.

private office of Mr. Roth, and, at the close of the interview, told me what had occurred. On my expressing surprise, he went on to relate that he had information on native matters which would surprise me more. He then produced the copy of a register, kept in the Landdrost's office, of men, women, and children, to the number of four hundred and eighty (480), who had been disposed of by one Boer to another for a consideration. In one case an ox was given in exchange, in another goats, in a third a blanket, and so forth. Many of these natives he (Mr. Nachtigal) knew personally. The copy was certified as true and correct by an official of the Republic, and I would mention his name now, only that I am persuaded that it would cost the man his life if his act became known to the Boers."

On the 16th May 1881, a native, named Frederick Molepo, was examined by the Royal Commission. The following are extracts from his examination:—

"(*Sir E. Wood.*) Are you a Christian?—Yes.

"(*Sir H. de Villiers.*) How long were you a slave?—Half a year.

"How do you know that you were a slave? Might you not have been an apprentice?—No, I was not apprenticed.

"How do you know?—They got me from my parents, and ill-treated me.

"(*Sir E. Wood.*) How many times did you get the stick?—Every day.

"(*Sir H. de Villiers.*) What did the Boers do with you when they caught you?—They sold me.

"How much did they sell you for?—One cow and a big pot."

On the 28th May 1881, amongst the other documents

handed in for the consideration of the Royal Commission, is the statement of a headman, whose name it has been considered advisable to omit in the blue-book for fear the Boers should take vengeance on him. He says, "I say, that if the English government dies I shall die too; I would rather die than be under the Boer Government. I am the man who helped to make bricks for the church you see now standing in the square here (Pretoria), as a slave without payment. As a representative of my people I am still obedient to the English Government, and willing to obey all commands from them, even to die for their cause in this country, rather than submit to the Boers.

"I was under Shambok, my chief, who fought the Boers formerly, but he left us, and we were *put up to auction* and sold among the Boers. I want to state this myself to the Royal Commission in Newcastle. I was bought by Fritz Botha and sold by Frederick Botha, who was then veld cornet (justice of the peace) of the Boers."[1]

It would be easy to find more reports of the slave-trading practices of the Boers, but as the above are fair samples it will not be necessary to do so. My readers will be able from them to form some opinion as to whether or not slavery or apprenticeship existed in the

[1] I have taken the liberty to quote all these extracts exactly as they stand in the original, instead of weaving their substance into my narrative, in order that I may not be accused, as so often happens to authors who write upon this subject, of having presented a garbled version of the truth. The original of every extract is to be found in blue-books presented to Parliament. I have thought it best to confine myself to these, and avoid repeating stories of cruelties and slavery, however well authenticated, that have come to my knowledge privately such stories being always more or less open to suspicion.

Transvaal. If they come to the conclusion that it did, it must be borne in mind that what existed in the past will certainly exist again in the future. Natives are not now any fonder of working for Boers than they were a few years back, and Boers must get labour somehow. If, on the other hand, it did not exist, then the Boers are a grossly slandered people, and all writers on the subject, from Livingstone down, have combined to take away their character.

Leaving native questions for the present, we must now return to the general affairs of the country. When President Burgers opened the special sitting of the Volksraad, on the 4th September, he appealed, it will be remembered, to that body for pecuniary aid to liquidate the expenses of the war. This appeal was responded to by the passing of a war tax, under which every owner of a farm was to pay £10, the owner of half a farm £5, and so on. The tax was not a very just one, since it fell with equal weight on the rich man who held twenty farms and the poor man who held but one. Its justice or injustice was, however, to a great extent immaterial, since the free and independent burghers, including some of the members of the Volksraad who had imposed it, promptly refused to pay it, or indeed, whilst they were about it, any other tax. As the Treasury was already empty, and creditors were pressing, this refusal was most ill-timed, and things began to look very black indeed. Meanwhile, in addition to the ordinary expenditure, and the interest payable on debts, money had to be found to pay Von Schlickmann's volunteers. As there was no cash in the country, this was done by issuing Government promissory notes, known as "goodfors," or vulgarly as

"good for nothings," and by promising them all booty, and to each man a farm of two thousand acres, lying east and north-east of the Loolu mountains—in other words, in Secocœni's territory, which did not belong to the Government to give away. The officials were the next to suffer, and for six months before the Annexation these unfortunate individuals lived as best they could, for they certainly got no salary, except in the case of a postmaster, who was told to help himself to his pay in stamps. The Government issued large numbers of bills, but the banks refused to discount them, and in some cases the neighbouring colonies had to advance money to the Transvaal post-cart contractors, who were carrying the mails, as a matter of charity. The Government even mortgaged the great salt-pan near Pretoria for the paltry sum of £400, whilst the leading officials of the Government were driven to pledging their own private credit in order to obtain the smallest article necessary to its continuance. In fact, to such a pass did things come that when the country was annexed a single threepenny bit (which had doubtless been overlooked) was found in the Treasury chest, together with acknowledgments of debts to the extent of nearly £300,000.

Nor was the refusal to pay taxes, which they were powerless to enforce, the only difficulty with which the Government had to contend. Want of money is as bad and painful a thing to a State as to an individual, but there are perhaps worse things than want of money, one of which is to be deserted by your own friends and household. This was the position of the Government of the Republic; no sooner was it involved in overwhelming difficulties than its own subjects commenced to bait it, more especially the English portion of its

subjects. They complained to the English authorities about the commandeering of members of their family or goods; they petitioned the British Government to interfere, and generally made themselves as unpleasant as possible to the local authorities. Such a course of action was perhaps natural, but it can hardly be said to be either quite logical or just. The Transvaal Government had never asked them to come and live in the country, and if they did so, it was presumably at their own risk. On the other hand, it must be remembered that many of the agitators had accumulated property, to leave which would mean ruin; and they saw that, unless something was done, its value would be destroyed.

Under the pressure of all these troubles the Boers themselves split up into factions, as they are always ready to do. The Dopper party declared that they had had enough progress, and proposed the extremely conservative Paul Kruger as President, Burgers' time having nearly expired. Paul Kruger accepted the candidature, although he had previously promised his support to Burgers, and distrust of each other was added to the other difficulties of the Executive, the Transvaal becoming a house very much divided against itself. Natives, Doppers, Progressionists, Officials, English, were all pulling different ways, and each striving for his own advantage. Anything more hopeless than the position of the country on the 1st January 1877 it is impossible to conceive. Enemies surrounded it; on every border there was the prospect of a serious war. In the exchequer there was nothing but piles of overdue bills. The President was helpless, and mistrustful of his officers, and the officers were caballing against

the President. All the ordinary functions of Government had ceased, and trade was paralysed. Now and then wild proposals were made to relieve the State of its burdens, some of which partook of the nature of repudiation, but these were the exception; the majority of the inhabitants, who would neither fight nor pay taxes, sat still and awaited the catastrophe, utterly careless of all consequences.

CHAPTER III.

THE ANNEXATION.

The state of affairs described in the previous chapter was one that filled the Secretary of State for the Colonies with alarm. During his tenure of office Lord Carnarvon evidently had the permanent welfare of South Africa much at heart, and he saw with apprehension that the troubles that were brewing in the Transvaal were of a nature likely to involve the Cape and Natal in a native war. Though there is a broad line of demarcation between Dutch and English, it is not so broad but that a victorious nation like the Zulus might cross it, and beginning by fighting the Boer, might end by fighting the white man irrespective of race. When the reader reflects how terrible would be the consequences of a combination of native tribes against the Whites, and how easily such a combination might at that time have been brought about in the first flush of native successes, he will understand the anxiety with which all thinking men watched the course of events in the Transvaal in 1876.

At last they took such a serious turn that the Home Government saw that some action must be taken if the catastrophe was to be averted, and determined to despatch Sir Theophilus Shepstone as Special Commis-

sioner to the Transvaal, with powers, should it be necessary, to annex the country to Her Majesty's dominions, "in order to secure the peace and safety of Our said colonies and of Our subjects elsewhere."

The terms of his Commission were unusually large, leaving a great deal to his discretionary power. In choosing that officer for the execution of a most difficult and delicate mission, the Government, doubtless, made a very wise selection. Sir Theophilus Shepstone is a man of remarkable tact and ability, combined with great openness and simplicity of mind, and one whose name will always have a leading place in South African history. During a long official lifetime he has had to do with most of the native races in South Africa, and certainly knows them and their ways better than any living man; whilst he is by them all regarded with a peculiar and affectionate reverence. He is *par excellence* their great white chief and "father," and a word from him, even now that he has retired from active life, still carries more weight than the formal remonstrances of any governor in South Africa.

With the Boers he is almost equally well acquainted, having known many of them personally for years. He possesses, moreover, the rare power of winning the regard and affection, as well as the respect, of those about him in such a marked degree that those who have served him once would go far to serve him again. Sir T. Shepstone, however, has enemies like other people, and is commonly reported among them to be a disciple of Machiavelli, and to have his mind steeped in all the darker wiles of Kafir policy. The Annexation of the Transvaal is by them

attributed to a successful and vigorous use of those arts that distinguished the diplomacy of two centuries ago. Falsehood and bribery are supposed to have been the great levers used to effect the change, together with threats of extinction at the hands of a savage and unfriendly nation.

That the Annexation was a triumph of mind over matter is quite true, but whether or no that triumph was unworthily obtained, I will leave those who read this short chronicle of the events connected with it to judge. I saw it somewhat darkly remarked in a newspaper the other day that the history of the Annexation had evidently yet to be written; and I fear that the remark represents the feeling of most people about that event, implying as it did that it was carried out by means certainly mysteriously and presumably doubtful. I am afraid that those who think thus will be disappointed in what I have to say about the matter, since I know that the means employed to bring the Boers—

"Fracti bello, fatisque repulsi"—

under Her Majesty's authority were throughout as fair and honest as the Annexation itself was, in my opinion, right and necessary.

To return to Sir T. Shepstone. He undoubtedly had faults as a ruler, one of the most prominent of which was that his natural mildness of character would never allow him to act with severity even when severity was necessary. The very criminals condemned to death ran a good chance of reprieve when he had to sign their death-warrants. He has also that worst of faults (so-called), in one fitted by

nature to become great—want of ambition, a failing that in such a man marks him the possessor of an even and a philosophic mind. It was no seeking of his own that raised him out of obscurity, and when his work was done to comparative obscurity he elected to return, though whether a man of his ability and experience in South African affairs should, at the present crisis, be allowed to remain there, is another question.

On the 20th December 1876, Sir T. Shepstone wrote to President Burgers, informing him of his approaching visit to the Transvaal, to secure, if possible, the adjustment of existing troubles, and the adoption of such measures as might be best calculated to prevent their recurrence in the future.

On his road to Pretoria, Sir Theophilus received a hearty welcome from the Boer as well as the English inhabitants of the country. One of these addresses to him says: "Be assured, high honourable Sir, that we burghers, now assembled together, entertain the most friendly feeling towards your Government, and that we shall agree with anything you may do in conjunction with our Government for the progress of our State, the strengthening against our native enemies, and for the general welfare of all the inhabitants of the whole of South Africa. Welcome in Heidelberg, and welcome in the Transvaal."

At Pretoria the reception of the Special Commissioner was positively enthusiastic; the whole town came out to meet him, and the horses having been taken out of the carriage, he was dragged in triumph through the streets. In his reply to the address presented to him, Sir Theophilus shadowed forth the

objects of his mission in these words: "Recent events in this country have shown to all thinking men the absolute necessity for closer union and more oneness of purpose among the Christian Governments of the southern portion of this continent: the best interests of the native races, no less than the peace and prosperity of the white, imperatively demand it, and I rely upon you and upon your Government to co-operate with me in endeavouring to achieve the great and glorious end of inscribing on a general South African banner the appropriate motto—"Eendragt maakt magt" (Unity makes strength).

A few days after his arrival a commission was appointed, consisting of Messrs. Henderson and Osborn, on behalf of the Special Commissioner, and Messrs. Kruger and Jorissen, on behalf of the Transvaal Government, to discuss the state of the country. This commission came to nothing, and was on both sides nothing more than a bit of by-play.

The arrival of the mission was necessarily regarded with mixed feelings by the inhabitants of the Transvaal. By one party it was eagerly greeted, viz., the English section of the population, who devoutly hoped that it had come to annex the country. With the exception of the Hollander element, the officials also were glad of its arrival, and secretly hoped that the country would be taken over, when there would be more chance of their getting their arrear pay. The better educated Boers also were for the most part satisfied that there was no hope for the country unless England helped it in some way, though they did not like having to accept the help. But the more bigoted and narrow-minded among them were undoubtedly

opposed to English interference, and under their leader, Paul Kruger, who was at the time running for the President's chair, did their best to be rid of it. They found ready allies in the Hollander clientelle, with which Mr. Burgers had surrounded himself, headed by the famous Dr. Jorissen, who was, like most of the rulers of this singular State, an ex-clergyman, but now an Attorney-general, not learned in the law. These men were for the most part entirely unfit for the positions they held, and feared that in the event of the country changing hands they might be ejected from them; and also, they did all Englishmen the favour to regard them with that peculiarly virulent and general hatred which is a part of the secret creed of many foreigners, more especially of such as are under our protection. As may easily be imagined, what between all these different parties and the presence of the Special Commissioner, there were certainly plenty of intrigues going on in Pretoria during the first few months of 1877, and the political excitement was very great. Nobody knew how far Sir T. Shepstone was prepared to go, and everybody was afraid of putting out his hand further than he could pull it back, and trying to make himself comfortable on two stools at once. Members of the Volksraad and other prominent individuals in the country who had during the day been denouncing the Commissioner in no measured terms, and even proposing that he and his staff should be shot as a warning to the English Government, might be seen arriving at his house under cover of the shades of evening, to have a little talk with him, and express the earnest hope that it was his intention to annex the country as soon as

possible. It is necessary to assist at a peaceable annexation to learn the depth of meanness human nature is capable of.

In Pretoria, at any rate, the ladies were of great service to the cause of the mission, since they were nearly all in favour of a change of government, and, that being the case, they naturally soon brought their husbands, brothers, and lovers to look at things from the same point of view. It was a wise man who said that in any matter where it is necessary to obtain the goodwill of a population you should win over the women; that done, you need not trouble yourself about the men.

Though the country was thus overflowing with political intrigues, nothing of the kind went on in the Commissioner's camp. It was not he who made the plots to catch the Transvaalers; on the contrary, they made the plots to catch him. For several months all that he did was to sit still and let the rival passions work their way, fighting what the Zulus afterwards called the "fight of sit down." When anybody came to see him he was very glad to meet them, pointed out the desperate condition of the country, and asked them if they could suggest a remedy. And that was about all he did do, beyond informing himself very carefully as to all that was going on in the country, and the movements of the natives within and outside its borders. There was no money spent in bribery, as has been stated, though it is impossible to imagine a state of affairs in which it would have been more easy to bribe, or in which it could have been done with greater effect; unless indeed the promise that some pension should be paid to President Burgers can

be called a bribe, which it was certainly never intended to be, but simply a guarantee that after having spent all his private means on behalf of the State he should not be left destitute. The statement that the Annexation was effected under a threat that if the Government did not give its consent Sir T. Shepstone would let loose the Zulus on the country is also a wicked and malicious invention, but with this I shall deal more at length further on.

It must not, however, be understood that the Annexation was a foregone conclusion, or that Sir T. Shepstone came up to the Transvaal with the fixed intention of annexing the country without reference to its position, merely with a view of extending British influence, or, as has been absurdly stated, in order to benefit Natal. He had no fixed purpose, whether it were necessary or no, of exercising the full powers given to him by his commission; on the contrary, he was all along most anxious to find some internal resources within the State by means of which Annexation could be averted, and of this fact his various letters and despatches give full proof. Thus, in his letter to President Burgers, of the 9th April 1877, in which he announces his intention of annexing the country, he says: "I have more than once assured your Honour that if I could think of any plan by which the independence of the State could be maintained by its own internal resources I would most certainly not conceal that plan from you." It is also incidentally remarkably confirmed by a passage in Mr. Burgers' posthumous defence, in which he says: "Hence I met Shepstone alone in my house, and opened up the subject of his mission. With a candour

that astonished me, he avowed that his purpose was to annex the country, as he had sufficient grounds for it, unless I could so alter as to satisfy his Government. My plan of a new constitution, modelled after that of America, of a standing police force of two hundred mounted men, was then proposed. He promised to give me time to call the Volksraad together, and to *abandon his design* if the Volksraad would adopt these measures, and the country be willing to submit to them, and to carry them out." Further on he says: "In justice to Shepstone I must say that I would not consider an officer of my Government to have acted faithfully if he had not done what Shepstone did."

It has also been frequently alleged in England, and always seems to be taken as the groundwork of argument in the matter of the Annexation, that the Special Commissioner represented that the majority of the inhabitants wished for the Annexation, and that it was sanctioned on that ground. This statement shows the great ignorance that exists in this country of South African affairs, an ignorance which in this case has been carefully fostered by Mr. Gladstone's Government for party purposes, they having found it necessary to assume, in order to make their position in the matter tenable, that Sir T. Shepstone and other officers had been guilty of misrepresentation. Unfortunately, the Government and its supporters have been more intent upon making out their case than upon ascertaining the truth of their statements. If they had taken the trouble to refer to Sir T. Shepstone's despatches, they would have found that the ground on which the Transvaal was annexed was, not because the majority of the inhabitants wished for it

but because the State was drifting into anarchy, was bankrupt, and was about to be destroyed by native tribes. They would further have found that Sir T. Shepstone never represented that the majority of the Boers were in favour of Annexation. What he did say was that most thinking men in the country saw no other way out of the difficulty; but what proportion of the Boers can be called "thinking men?" He also said, in the fifteenth paragraph of his despatch to Lord Carnarvon of 6th March 1877, that petitions signed by 2500 people, representing every class of the community, out of a total adult male population of 8000, had been presented to the Government of the Republic, setting forth its difficulties and dangers, and praying it "to treat with me for their amelioration or removal." He also stated, and with perfect truth, that many more would have signed had it not been for the terrorism that was exercised, and that all the towns and villages in the country desired the change, which was a patent fact.

This is the foundation on which the charge of misrepresentation is built—a charge which has been manipulated so skilfully, and with such a charming disregard for the truth, that the British public has been duped into believing it. When it is examined into, it vanishes into thin air.

But a darker charge has been brought against the Special Commissioner—a charge affecting his honour as a gentleman and his character as a Christian; and, strange to say, has gained a considerable credence, especially amongst a certain party in England. I allude to the statement that he called up the Zulu army with the intention of sweeping the Transvaal

if the Annexation was objected to. I may state, from my own personal knowledge, that the report is a complete falsehood, and that no such threat was ever made, either by Sir T. Shepstone or by anybody connected with him, and I will briefly prove what I say.

When the mission first arrived at Pretoria, a message came from Cetywayo to the effect that he had heard that the Boers had fired at "Sompseu" (Sir T. Shepstone), and announcing his intention of attacking the Transvaal if "his father" was touched. About the middle of March alarming rumours began to spread as to the intended action of Cetywayo with reference to the Transvaal; but as Sir T. Shepstone did not think that the king would be likely to make any hostile movement whilst he was in the country, he took no steps in the matter. Neither did the Transvaal Government ask his advice and assistance. Indeed, a remarkable trait in the Boers is their supreme self-conceit, which makes them believe that they are capable of subduing all the natives in Africa, and of thrashing the whole British army if necessary. Unfortunately, the recent course of events has tended to confirm them in their opinion as regards their white enemies. To return: towards the second week in April, or the week before the proclamation of Annexation was issued, things began to look very serious; indeed, rumours that could hardly be discredited reached the Special Commissioner that the whole Zulu army was collected in a chain of Impis or battalions, with the intention of bursting into the Transvaal and sweeping the country. Knowing how terrible would be the catastrophe if this were to

happen, Sir T. Shepstone was much alarmed about the matter, and at a meeting with the Executive Council of the Transvaal Government he pointed out to them the great danger in which the country was placed. This was done in the presence of several officers of his staff, and it was on this friendly exposition of the state of affairs that the charge that he had threatened the country with invasion by the Zulus was based. On the 11th April, or the day before the Annexation, a message was despatched to Cetywayo, telling him of the reports that had reached Pretoria, and stating that if they were true he must forthwith give up all such intentions, as the Transvaal would at once be placed under the sovereignty of Her Majesty, and that if he had assembled any armies for purposes of aggression they must be disbanded at once. Sir T. Shepstone's message reached Zululand not a day too soon. Had the Annexation of the Transvaal been delayed by a few weeks even—and this is a point which I earnestly beg Englishmen to remember in connection with that act—Cetywayo's armies would have entered the Transvaal, carrying death before them, and leaving a wilderness behind them.

Cetywayo's answer to the Special Commissioner's message will sufficiently show, to use Sir Theophilus' own words in his despatch on the subject, "the pinnacle of peril which the Republic and South Africa generally had reached at the moment when the Annexation took place." He says, "I thank my Father Sompseu (Sir T. Shepstone) for his message. I am glad that he has sent it, because the Dutch have tired me out, and I intended to fight them once and once only, and to drive them over the Vaal. Kabana

(name of messenger), you see my Impis (armies) are gathered. It was to fight the Dutch I called them together; now I will send them back to their homes. Is it well that two men ('amadoda-amabili') should be made 'iziula' (fools)? In the reign of my father Umpanda the Boers were constantly moving their boundary further into my country. Since his death, the same thing has been done. I had therefore determined to end it once for all!" The message then goes on to other matters, and ends with a request to be allowed to fight the Amaswazi, because "they fight together and kill one another. This," says Cetywayo naively, "is wrong, and I want to chastise them for it."

This quotation will suffice to convince all reasonable men, putting aside all other matters, from what imminent danger the Transvaal was delivered by the much-abused Annexation.

Some months after that event, however, it occurred to the ingenious mind of some malicious individual in Natal that, properly used, much political capital might be made out of this Zulu incident, and the story that Cetywayo's army had been called up by Sir Theophilus himself to overawe, and, if necessary, subdue the Transvaal, was accordingly invented and industriously circulated. Although Sir T. Shepstone at once caused it to be authoritatively contradicted, such an astonishing slander naturally took firm root, and on the 12th April 1879 we have Mr. M. W. Pretorius, one of the Boer leaders, publicly stating at a meeting of the farmers that "previous to the Annexation Sir T. Shepstone had threatened the Transvaal with an attack from the Zulus as an argument for advancing the

Annexation." Under such an imputation the Government could no longer keep silence, and accordingly Sir Owen Lanyon, who was then Administrator of the Transvaal, caused the matter to be officially investigated, with these results, which are summed up by him in a letter to Mr. Pretorius, dated 1st May 1879:—

1. The records of the Republican Executive Council contained no allusion to any such statement.

2. Two members of that Council filed statements in which they unreservedly denied that Sir T. Shepstone used the words or threats imputed to him.

3. Two officers of Sir T. Shepstone's staff, who were always present with him at interviews with the Executive Council, filed statements to the same effect.

"I have no doubt," adds Sir Owen Lanyon, "that the report has been originated and circulated by some evil-disposed person."

In addition to this evidence we have a letter written to the Colonial Office by Sir T. Shepstone, dated London, August 12, 1879, in which he points out that Mr. Pretorius was not even present at any of the interviews with the Executive Council on which occasion he accuses him of having made use of the threats. He further shows that the use of such a threat on his part would have been the depth of folly, and "knowingly to court the instant and ignominious failure of my mission," because the Boers were so persuaded of their own prowess that they could not be convinced that they stood in any danger from native sources, and also because "such play with such keen-edged tools as the excited passions of savages are, and especially such savages as I knew the Zulus to be, is not what

an experience of forty-two years in managing them inclined me to." And yet, in the face of all this accumulated evidence, this report continues to be believed, that is, by those who wished to believe it.

Such are the accusations that have been brought against the manner of the Annexation and the officer who carried it out, and never were accusations more groundless. Indeed, both for party purposes, and from personal animus, every means, fair or foul, has been used to discredit it and all connected with it. To take a single instance, one author (Miss Colenso, p. 134, "History of the Zulu War") actually goes the length of putting a portion of a speech made by President Burgers into the mouth of Sir T. Shepstone, and then abusing him for his incredible profanity. Surely this exceeds the limits of fair criticism.

Before I go on to the actual history of the Annexation there is one point I wish to submit to my reader. In England the change of Government has always been talked of as though it only affected the forty thousand white inhabitants of the country, whilst everybody seems to forget that this same land had about a million human beings living on it, its original owners, and only, unfortunately for themselves, possessing a black skin, and therefore entitled to little consideration,—even at the hands of the most philanthropic Government in the world. It never seems to have occurred to those who have raised so much outcry on behalf of the forty thousand Boers, to inquire what was thought of the matter by the million natives. If they were to be allowed a voice in their own disposal, the country was certainly annexed by the wish of a very large majority of the inhabitants. It is true

that Secocœni, instigated thereto by the Boers, afterwards continued the war against us, but, with the exception of this one chief, the advent of our rule was hailed with joy by every native in the Transvaal, and even he was glad of it at the time. During our period of rule in the Transvaal the natives have had, as they foresaw, more peace than at any time since the white man set foot in the land. They have paid their taxes gladly, and there has been no fighting among themselves; but since we have given up the country we hear a very different tale. It is this million of men, women, and children who, notwithstanding their black skins, live and feel, and have intelligence as much as ourselves, who are the principal, because the most numerous sufferers from Mr. Gladstone's conjuring tricks, that can turn a Sovereign into a Suzerain as airily as the professor of magic brings a litter of guinea-pigs out of a top hat. It is our falsehood and treachery to them whom we took over "for ever," as we told them, and whom we have now handed back to their natural enemies to be paid off for their loyalty to the Englishman, that is the blackest stain in all this black business, and that has destroyed our prestige, and caused us to be looked on amongst them, for they do not hide their opinion, as "cowards and liars."

But very little attention, however, seems to have been paid to native views or claims at any time in the Transvaal; indeed they have all along been treated as serfs of the soil, to be sold with it, if necessary, to a new master. It is true that the Government, acting under pressure from the Aborigines Protection Society, made, on the occasion of the Surrender, a feeble effort to secure the independence of some of the native

tribes; but when the Boer leaders told them shortly that they would have nothing of the sort, and that, if they were not careful, they would reoccupy Laing's Nek, the proposal was at once dropped, with many assurances that no offence was intended. The worst of the matter is that this treatment of our native subjects and allies will assuredly recoil on the heads of future innocent Governments.

Shortly after the appointment of the Joint-Commission alluded to at the beginning of this chapter, President Burgers, who was now in possession of the Special Commissioner's intentions, should he be unable to carry out reforms sufficiently drastic to satisfy the English Government, thought it best to call together the Volksraad. In the meantime, it had been announced that the "rebel" Secocœni had sued for peace and signed a treaty declaring himself a subject of the Republic. I shall have to enter into the question of this treaty a little further on, so I will at present only say that it was the first business laid before the Raad, and, after some discussion, ratified. Next in order to the Secocœni peace came the question of Confederation, as laid down in Lord Carnarvon's Permissive Bill. This proposal was laid before them in an earnest and eloquent speech by their President, who entreated them to consider the dangerous position of the Republic, and to face their difficulties like men. The question was referred to a committee, and an adverse report being brought up, was rejected without further consideration. It is just possible that intimidation had something to do with the summary treatment of so important a matter, seeing that whilst it was being argued a large mob of Boers, looking very

formidable with their sea-cow hide whips, watched every move of their representatives through the windows of the Volksraad Hall. It was Mr. Chamberlain's caucus system in practical and visible operation.

A few days after the rejection of the Confederation Bill, President Burgers, who had frequently alluded to the desperate condition of the Republic, and stated that either some radical reform must be effected or the country must come under the British flag, laid before the Raad a bran new constitution of a very remarkable nature, asserting that they must either accept it or lose their independence.

The first part of this strange document dealt with the people and their rights, which remained much as they were before, with the exception that the secrecy of all letters entrusted to the post was to be inviolable. The recognition of this right is an amusing incident in the history of a free Republic. Under following articles the Volksraad was entrusted with the charge of the native inhabitants of the State, the provision for the administration of justice, the conduct of education, the regulation of money-bills, &c. It is in the fourth chapter, however, that we come to the real gist of the Bill, which was the endowment of the State President with the authority of a dictator. Mr. Burgers thought to save the State by making himself an absolute monarch. He was to be elected for a period of seven instead of five years, and to be eligible for re-election. In him was vested the power of making all appointments without reference to the Legislature. All laws were to be drawn up by him, and he was to have the right of veto on Volksraad resolutions, which body he could summon and dissolve

at will. Finally, his Executive Council was to consist of heads of departments appointed by himself, and of one member of the Volksraad. The Volksraad treated this Bill in much the same way as they had dealt with the Permissive Confederation Bill, gave it a casual consideration, and threw it out.

The President, meanwhile, was doing his best to convince the Raad of the danger of the country; that the treasury was empty, whilst duns were pressing, that enemies were threatening on every side, and, finally, that Her Majesty's Special Commissioner was encamped within a thousand yards of them, watching their deliberations with some interest. He showed them that it was impossible at once to scorn reform and reject friendly offers, that it was doubtful if anything could save them, but that if they took no steps they were certainly lost as a nation. The "Fathers of the land," however, declined to dance to the President's piping. Then he took a bolder line. He told them that a guilty nation never can evade the judgment that follows its steps. He asked them "conscientiously to advise the people not obstinately to refuse a union with a powerful Government. He could not advise them to refuse such a union. . . . He did not believe that a new constitution would save them; for as little as the old constitution had brought them to ruin, so little would a new constitution bring salvation. . . . If the citizens of England had behaved towards the Crown as the burghers of this State had behaved to their Government, England would never have stood so long as she had." He pointed out to them their hopeless financial position. "To-day," he said, "a bill for £1100 was laid before me for signature; but I

would sooner have cut off my right hand than sign that paper—(cheers)—for I have not the slightest ground to expect that, when that bill becomes due, there will be a penny to pay it with." And finally, he exhorted them thus: "Let them make the best of the situation, and get the best terms they possibly could; let them agree to join their hands to those of their brethren in the south, and then from the Cape to the Zambesi there would be one great people. Yes, there was something grand in that, grander even than their idea of a Republic, something which ministered to their national feeling—(cheers)—and would this be so miserable? Yes, this would be miserable for those who would not be under the law, for the rebel and the revolutionist, but welfare and prosperity for the men of law and order."

These powerful words form a strong indictment against the Republic, and from them there can be little doubt that President Burgers was thoroughly convinced of the necessity and wisdom of the Annexation. It is interesting to compare them, and many other utterances of his made at this period, with the opinions he expresses in the posthumous document recently published, in which he speaks somewhat jubilantly of the lessons taught us on Laing's Nek and Majuba by such "an inherently weak people as the Boers," and points to them as striking instances of retribution. In this document he attributes the Annexation to the desire to advance English supremacy in South Africa, and to lay hold of the way to Central South Africa. It is, however, noticeable that he does not in any way indicate how it could have been averted, and the State continue to exist; and he seems all along to feel that

his case is a weak one, for in explaining, or attempting to explain, why he had never defended himself from the charges brought against him in connection with the Annexation, he says: "Had I not endured in silence, had I not borne patiently all the accusations, but out of selfishness or fear told the plain truth of the case, the Transvaal would never have had the consideration it has now received from Great Britain. However unjust the Annexation was, my self-justification would have *exposed the Boers to such an extent*, and the state of the country in such a way, that it would have deprived them both of the sympathy of the world and the consideration of the English politicians." In other words, "If I had told the truth about things as I should have been obliged to do to justify myself, there would have been no more outcry about the Annexation, because the whole world, even the English Radicals, would have recognised how necessary it was, and what a fearful state the country was in."

But to let that pass, it is evident that President Burgers did not take the same view of the Annexation in 1877 as he did in 1881, and indeed his speeches to the Volksraad would read rather oddly printed in parallel columns with his posthumous statement. The reader would be forced to one of two conclusions, either on one of the two occasions he is saying what he does not mean, or he must have changed his mind. As I believe him to have been an honest man, I incline to the latter supposition; nor do I consider it so very hard to account for, taking into consideration his natural Dutch proclivities. In 1877 Burgers is the despairing head of a State driving rapidly to ruin, if not to actual extinction, when the strong hand of

the English Government is held out to him. What wonder that he accepts it gladly on behalf of his country, which is by its help brought into a state of greater prosperity than it has ever before known? In 1881 the wheel has gone round, and great events have come about whilst he lies dying. The enemies of the Boers have been destroyed, the powers of the Zulus and Secocœni are no more; the country has prospered under a healthy rule, and its finances have been restored. More,—glad tidings have come from Mid-Lothian to the "rebel and the revolutionist," whose hopes were flagging, and eloquent words have been spoken by the new English Dictator that have aroused a great rebellion. And, to crown all, English troops have suffered one massacre and three defeats, and England sues for peace from the South African peasant, heedless of honour or her broken word, so that the prayer be granted. With such events before him, that dying man may well have found cause to change his opinion. Doubtless the Annexation was wrong, since England disowns her acts; and may not that dream about the great South African Republic come true after all? Has not the pre-eminence of the Englishman received a blow from which it can never recover, and is not his control over Boers and natives irredeemably weakened? And must he,—Burgers,—go down to posterity as a Dutchman who tried to forward the interests of the English party? No, doubtless the Annexation was wrong; but it has done good, for it has brought about the downfall of the English: and we will end the argument in the very words of his last public utterance, with which he ends his statement: "South Africa gained more from this, and

has made a larger step forward in the march of freedom, than most people can conceive."

Who shall say that he is wrong? the words of dying men are sometimes prophetic! South Africa has made a great advance towards the "freedom" of a Dutch Republic.

This has been a digression, but I hope not an uninteresting one. To return—on the 1st March, Sir T. Shepstone met the Executive Council, and told them that in his opinion there was now but one remedy to be adopted, and that was that the Transvaal should be united with the English colonies of South Africa under one head, namely the Queen, saying at the same time that the only thing now left to the Republic was to make the best arrangements it could for the future benefit of its inhabitants, and to submit to that which he saw to be, and every thinking man saw to be, inevitable. So soon as this information was officially communicated to the Raad, for a good proportion of its members were already acquainted with it unofficially, it flew from a state of listless indifference into vigorous and hasty action. The President was censured, and a committee was appointed to consider and report upon the situation, which reported in favour of the adoption of Burgers' new constitution. Accordingly, the greatest part of this measure, which had been contemptuously rejected a few days before, was adopted almost without question, and Mr. Paul Kruger was appointed Vice-President. On the following day, a very drastic treason law was passed, borrowed from the statute-book of the Orange Free State, which made all public expression of opinion, if adverse to the Government, or in any way supporting the Annexa-

tion party, high treason. This done, the Assembly prorogued itself until—October 1881

During and after the sitting of the Raad, rumours arose that the chief Secocœni's signature to the treaty of peace, ratified by that body, had been obtained by misrepresentation. As ratified, this treaty consisted of three articles, according to which Secocœni consented, first, to become a subject of the Republic, and obey the laws of the country; secondly, to agree to a certain restricted boundary line; and, thirdly, to pay 2000 head of cattle; which, considering he had captured quite 5000 head, was not exorbitant.

Towards the end of February a written message was received from Secocœni by Sir T. Shepstone, dated after the signing of the supposed treaty. The original, which was written in Sisutu, was a great curiosity. The following is a correct translation:—

February 16, 1877.

"FOR MYN HEER SHEEPSTONE,—I beg you, Chief, come help me, the Boers are killing me, and I don't know the reasons why they should be angry with me; Chief, I beg you come with Myn Heer Merensky.—I am SIKUKUNI."

This message was accompanied by a letter from Mr. Merensky, a well-known and successful missionary, who had been for many years resident in Secocœni's country, in which he stated that he heard on very good authority that Secocœni had distinctly refused to agree to that article of the treaty by which he became a subject of the State. He adds that he cannot remain "silent while such tricks are played."

Upon this information, Sir T. Shepstone wrote to President Burgers, stating that "if the officer in whom you have placed confidence has withheld any portion of the truth from you, especially so serious a portion of it, he is guilty of a wrong towards you personally, as well as towards the Government, because he has caused you to assume an untenable position," and suggesting that a joint-commission should be despatched to Secocœni, to thoroughly sift the question in the interest of all concerned. This suggestion was after some delay agreed to, and a commission was appointed, consisting of Mr. Van Gorkom, a Hollander, and Mr. Holtshausen, a member of the Executive Council, on behalf of the Transvaal Government, and Mr. Osborn, R.M., and Captain Clarke, R.A.,[1] on behalf of the Commissioner, whom I accompanied as Secretary.

At Middleburg the native Gideon who acted as interpreter between Commandant Ferreira, C.M.G. (the officer who negotiated the treaty on behalf of the Boer Government), and Secocœni was examined, and also two natives, Petros and Jeremiah, who were with him, but did not actually interpret. All these men persisted that Secocœni had positively refused to become a subject of the Republic, and only consented to sign the treaty on the representations of Commandant Ferreira that it would only be binding as regards to the two articles about the cattle and the boundary line.

The Commission then proceeded to Secocœni's town, accompanied by a fresh set of interpreters, and had a long interview with Secocœni. The chief's Prime Minister or "mouth," Makurupiji, speaking in his

[1] Now Sir Marshall Clarke, Special Commissioner for Basutoland.

presence and on his behalf, and making use of the pronoun "I" before all the assembled headmen of the tribe, gave an account of the interview between Commandant Ferreira in the presence of that gentleman, who accompanied the Commission, and Secocœni, in almost the same words as had been used by the interpreters at Middleburg. He distinctly denied having consented to become a subject of the Republic or to stand under the law, and added that he feared he "had touched the feather to" (signed) things that he did not know of in the treaty. Commandant Ferreira then put some questions, but entirely failed to shake the evidence; on the contrary, he admitted by his questions that Secocœni had not consented to become a subject of the Republic. Secocœni had evidently signed the piece of paper under the impression that he was acknowledging his liability to pay 2000 head of cattle, and fixing a certain portion of his boundary line, and on the distinct understanding that he was not to become a subject of the State.

Now it was the Secocœni war that had brought the English Mission into the country, and if it could be shown that the Secocœni war had come to a successful termination, it would go far towards helping the Mission out again. To this end, it was necessary that the chief should declare himself a subject of the State, and thereby, by implication, acknowledge himself to have been a rebel, and admit his defeat. All that was required was a signature, and that once obtained the treaty was published and submitted to the Raad for confirmation, without a whisper being heard of the conditions under which this ignorant Basuto was induced to sign. Had no

Commission visited Secocœni, this treaty would afterwards have been produced against him in its entirety. Altogether, the history of the Secocœni Peace Treaty does not reassure one as to the genuineness of the treaties which the Boers are continually producing, purporting to have been signed by native chiefs, and, as a general rule, presenting the State with great tracts of country in exchange for a horse or a few oxen. However fond the natives may be of their Boer neighbours, such liberality can scarcely be genuine. On the other hand, it is so easy to induce a savage to sign a paper, or even, if he is reticent, to make a cross for him, and once made, as we all know, *litera scripta manet*, and becomes title to the lands.

During the Secocœni investigation, affairs in the Transvaal were steadily drifting towards anarchy. The air was filled with rumours; now it was reported that an outbreak was imminent amongst the English population at the Gold Fields, who had never forgotten Von Schlickmann's kind suggestion that they should be "subdued;" now it was said that Cetywayo had crossed the border, and might shortly be expected at Pretoria; now that a large body of Boers were on their road to shoot the Special Commissioner, his twenty-five policemen, and Englishmen generally, and so on.

Meanwhile, Paul Kruger and his party were not letting the grass grow under their feet, but worked public feeling with great vigour, with the double object of getting Paul made President and ridding themselves of the English. Articles in his support were printed in the well-known Dutch paper *Die Patriot*, published in the Cape Colony, which are so typical of the Boers and of the only literature that

has the slightest influence over them, that I will quote a few extracts from one of them.

After drawing a very vivid picture of the wretched condition of the country as compared to what it was when the Kafirs had "a proper respect" for the Boers, before Burgers came into power, the article proceeds to give the cause of this state of affairs. "God's word," it says, "gives us the solution. Look at Israel, while the people have a godly king, everything is prosperous, but under a godless prince the land retrogrades, and the whole of the people must suffer. Read Leviticus, chapter xxvi., with attention, &c. In the day of the Voortrekkers (pioneers), a handful of men chased a thousand Kafirs and made them run; so also in the Free State war (Deut. xxxii. 30; Jos. xxiii. 10; Lev. xxvi. 8). But mark, now, when Burgers became President, he knows no Sabbath, he rides through the land in and out of town on Sunday, he knows not the church and God's service (Lev. xxvi. 2, 3), to the scandal of pious people. And he formerly was a priest too. And what is the consequence? No harvest (Lev. xxvi. 16), an army of 6000 men runs because one man falls (Lev. xxvi. 17, &c.). What is now the remedy?" The remedy proves to be Paul Kruger, "because there is no other candidate. Because our Lord clearly points him out to be the man, for why is there no other candidate? Who arranged it this way?" Then follows a rather odd argument in favour of Paul's election. "Because he himself (Paul Kruger) acknowledges in his own reply that he is *incompetent,* but that all his ability is from our Lord. Because he is a warrior. Because he is a Boer." Then Paul

Kruger, the warrior and the Boer, is compared to Joan of Arc, "a simple Boer girl who came from behind the sheep." The burghers of the Transvaal are exhorted to acknowledge the hand of the Lord, and elect Paul Kruger, or to look for still heavier punishment. (Lev. xxvi. 18 *et seq.*) Next the *Patriot* proceeds to give a bit of advice to "our candidate, Paul Kruger." He is to deliver the land from the Kafirs. "The Lord has given you the heart of a warrior, arise and drive them," a bit of advice quite suited to his well-known character. But this chosen vessel was not to get all the loaves and fishes; on the contrary, as soon as he had fulfilled his mission of "driving" the Kafirs, he was to hand over his office to a "good" President. The article ends thus: "If the Lord wills to use you now to deliver this land from its enemies, and a day of peace and prosperity arises again, and you see that you are not exactly the statesman to further govern the Republic, then it will be your greatest honour to say, 'Citizens, I have delivered you from the enemy, I am no statesman, but now you have peace and time to choose and elect a *good* President.'"

An article such as the above is instructive reading, as showing the low calibre of the minds that are influenced by it. Yet such writings and sermons have more power among the Boers than any other arguments, appealing as they do to the fanaticism and vanity of their nature, which causes them to believe that the Divinity is continually interfering on their behalf at the cost of other people. It will be noticed that the references given are all to the Old Testament, and nearly all refer to acts of blood.

These doctrines were not, however, at all acceptable to Burgers' party, or the more enlightened members of the community, and so bitter did the struggle of rival opinions become that there is very little doubt that had the country not been annexed, civil war would have been added to its other calamities. Meanwhile the natives were from day to day becoming more restless, and messengers were constantly arriving at the Special Commissioner's camp, begging that their tribe might be put under the Queen, and stating that they would fight rather than submit any longer to the Boers.

At length on the 9th April, Sir T. Shepstone informed the Government of the Republic that he was about to declare the Transvaal British territory. He told them that he had considered and reconsidered his determination, but that he could see no possible means within the State by which it could free itself from the burdens that were sinking it to destruction, adding that if he could have found such means he would certainly not have hidden them from the Government. This intimation was received in silence, though all the later proceedings with reference to the Annexation were in reality carried out in concert with the authorities of the Republic. Thus on the 13th March the Government submitted a paper of ten questions to Sir T. Shepstone as regards the future condition of the Transvaal under English rule, whether the debts of the State would be guaranteed, &c. To these questions replies were given which were on the whole satisfactory to the Government. As these replies formed the basis of the proclamation guarantees, it is not necessary to enter into them.

It was further arranged by the Republican Government that a formal protest should be entered against the Annexation, which was accordingly prepared and privately shown to the Special Commissioner. The Annexation proclamation was also shown to President Burgers, and a paragraph eliminated at his suggestion. In fact, the Special Commissioner and the President, together with most of his Executive, were quite at one as regards the necessity of the proclamation being issued, their joint endeavours being directed to the prevention of any disturbance, and to secure a good reception for the change.

At length, after three months of inquiry and negotiation, the proclamation of annexation was on the 12th of April 1877 read by Mr. Osborn, accompanied by some other gentlemen of Sir T. Shepstone's staff. It was an anxious moment for all concerned. To use the words of the Special Commissioner in his despatch home on the subject, "Every effort had been made during the previous fortnight by, it is said, educated Hollanders, and who had but lately arrived in the country, to rouse the fanaticism of the Boers, and to induce them to offer 'bloody' resistance to what it was known I intended to do. The Boers were appealed to in the most inflammatory language by printed manifestoes and memorials; . . . . it was urged that I had but a small escort, which could easily be overpowered." In a country so full of desperadoes and fanatical haters of anything English, it was more than possible that, though such an act would have been condemned by the general sense of the country, a number of men could easily be found who would think they were doing a righteous act in

greeting the "annexationists" with an ovation of bullets. I do not mean that the anxiety was personal, because I do not think the members of that small party set any higher value on their lives than other people, but it was absolutely necessary for the success of the act itself, and for the safety of the country, that not a single shot should be fired. Had that happened it is probable that the whole country would have been involved in confusion and bloodshed, the Zulus would have broken in, and the Kafirs would have risen; in fact, to use Cetywayo's words, "the land would have burned with fire."

It will therefore be easily understood what an anxious hour that was both for the Special Commissioner sitting up at Government House, and for his staff down on the Market Square, and how thankful they were when the proclamation was received with hearty cheers by the crowd. Mr. Burgers' protest, which was read immediately afterwards, was received in respectful silence.

And thus the Transvaal Territory passed for a while into the great family of the English Colonies. I believe that the greatest political opponent of the act will bear tribute to the very remarkable ability with which it was carried out. When the variety and number of the various interests that had to be conciliated, the obstinate nature of the individuals who had to be convinced, as well as the innate hatred of the English name and ways which had to be overcome to carry out this act successfully, are taken into consideration, together with a thousand other matters, the neglect of any one of which would have sufficed to make failure certain, it will be seen what tact and

skill and knowledge of human nature was required to execute so difficult a task. It must be remembered that no force was used, and that there never was any threat of force. The few troops that were to enter the Transvaal were four weeks' march from Pretoria at the time. There was nothing whatsoever to prevent the Boers putting a summary stop to the proceedings of the Commissioner if they had thought fit.

That Sir Theophilus played a bold and hazardous game nobody will deny, but, like most players who combine boldness with coolness of head and justice of cause, he won; and, without shedding a single drop of blood, or even confiscating an acre of land, and at no cost, annexed a great country, and averted a very serious war. That same country four years later cost us a million of money, the loss of nearly a thousand men killed and wounded, and the ruin of many more confiding thousands, to surrender. It is true, however, that nobody can accuse the retrocession of having been conducted with judgment or ability—very much the contrary.

There can be no more ample justification of the issue of the Annexation proclamation than the proclamation itself.

First, it touches on the Sand River Convention of 1852, by which independence was granted to the State, and shows that the "evident objects and inciting motives" in granting such guarantee were to promote peace, free-trade, and friendly intercourse, in the hope and belief that the Republic "would become a flourishing and self-sustaining State, a source of strength and security to neighbouring European com-

munities, and a point from which Christianity and civilisation might rapidly spread toward Central Africa." It goes on to show how these hopes have been disappointed, and how that "increasing weakness in the State itself on the one side, and more than corresponding growth of real strength and confidence among the native tribes on the other, have produced their natural and inevitable consequence . . . that after more or less of irritating conflict with aboriginal tribes to the north, there commenced about the year 1867 gradual abandonment to the natives in that direction of territory settled by burghers of the Transvaal "in well-built towns and villages and on granted farms."

It goes on to show that "this decay of power and ebb of authority in the north is being followed by similar processes in the south under yet more dangerous circumstances. People of this State residing in that direction have been compelled within the last three months, at the bidding of native chiefs, and at a moment's notice, to leave their farms and homes, their standing crops . . . all to be taken possession of by natives, but that the Government is more powerless than ever to vindicate its assumed rights or to resist the declension that is threatening its existence." It then recites how all the other colonies and communities of South Africa have lost confidence in the State, how it is in a condition of hopeless bankruptcy, and its commerce annihilated, whilst the inhabitants are divided into factions, and the Government has fallen into "helpless paralysis." How also the prospect of the election of a new President, instead of being looked forward to with hope, would in the opinion of

all parties be the signal for civil war, anarchy, and bloodshed. How that this state of things affords the very strongest temptation to the great neighbouring native powers to attack the country, a temptation that they were only too ready and anxious to yield to, and that the State was in far too feeble a condition to repel such attacks, from which it had hitherto only been saved by the repeated representations of the Government of Natal. The next paragraphs I will quote as they stand, for they sum up the reasons for the Annexation.

"That the Secocœni war, which would have produced but little effect on a healthy constitution, has not only proved suddenly fatal to the resources and reputation of the Republic, but has shown itself to be a culminating point in the history of South Africa, in that a Makatee or Basuto tribe, unwarlike and of no account in Zulu estimation, successfully withstood the strength of the State, and disclosed for the first time to the native powers outside the Republic, from the Zambesi to the Cape, the great change that had taken place in the relative strength of the white and black races, that this disclosure at once shook the prestige of the white man in South Africa, and placed every European community in peril, that this common danger has caused universal anxiety, has given to all concerned the right to investigate its cause, and to protect themselves from its consequences, and has imposed the duty upon those who have the power to shield enfeebled civilisation from the encroachments of barbarism and inhumanity." It proceeds to point out that the Transvaal will be the first to suffer from the results of its own policy, and that it is for every

reason perfectly impossible for Her Majesty's Government to stand by and see a friendly white State ravaged, knowing that its own possessions will be the next to suffer. That Her Majesty's Government, being persuaded that the only means to prevent such a catastrophe would be by the annexation of the country, and, knowing that this was the wish of a large proportion of the inhabitants of the Transvaal, the step must be taken. Next follows the formal annexation.

Together with the proclamation, an address was issued by Sir T. Shepstone to the burghers of the State, laying the facts before them in a friendly manner, more suited to their mode of thought than it was possible to do in a formal proclamation. This document, the issue of which was one of those touches that insured the success of the Annexation, was a powerful summing up in colloquial language of the arguments used in the proclamation, strengthened by quotations from the speeches of the President. It ends with these words: "It remains only for me to beg of you to consider and weigh what I have said calmly and without undue prejudice. Let not mere feeling or sentiment prevail over your judgment. Accept what Her Majesty's Government intends shall be, and what you will soon find from experience, is a blessing not only to you and your children, but to the whole of South Africa through you, and believe that I speak these words to you as a friend from my heart."

Two other proclamations were also issued, one notifying the assumption of the office of Administrator of the Government by Sir T. Shepstone, and the other

repealing the war-tax, which was doubtless an unequal and oppressive impost.

I have in the preceding pages stated all the principal grounds of the Annexation and briefly sketched the history of that event. In the next chapter I propose to follow the fortunes of the Transvaal under British Rule.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TRANSVAAL UNDER BRITISH RULE.

THE news of the Annexation was received all over the country with a sigh of relief, and in many parts of it with great rejoicings. At the Gold Fields, for instance, special thanksgiving services were held, and "God save the Queen" was sung in church. Nowhere was there the slightest disturbance, but, on the contrary, addresses of congratulation and thanks literally poured in by every mail, many of them signed by Boers who have since been conspicuous for their bitter opposition to English rule. At first, there was some doubt as to what would be the course taken under the circumstances by the volunteers enlisted by the late Republic. Major Clarke, R.A., was sent to convey the news, and to take command of them, unaccompanied save by his Kafir servant. On arrival at the principal fort, he at once ordered the Republican flag to be hauled down and the Union Jack run up, and his orders were promptly obeyed. A few days afterwards some members of the force thought better of it, and having made up their minds to kill him, came to the tent where he was sitting to carry out their purpose. On learning their kind intentions, Major Clarke fixed his eye-glass in his eye, and after steadily glaring at them through

it for some time, said, "You are all drunk, go back to your tents." The volunteers, quite overcome by his coolness and the fixity of his gaze, at once slipped off, and there was no further trouble. About three weeks after the Annexation, the 1–13th Regiment arrived at Pretoria, having been very well received all along the road by the Boers, who came from miles round to hear the band play. Its entry into Pretoria was quite a sight; the whole population turned out to meet it; indeed the feeling of rejoicing and relief was so profound that when the band began to play "God save the Queen" some of the women burst into tears.

Meanwhile the effect of the Annexation on the country was perfectly magical. Credit and commerce were at once restored; the railway bonds that were down to nothing in Holland rose with one bound to par, and the value of landed property nearly doubled. Indeed it would have been possible for any one, knowing what was going to happen, to have realised large sums of money by buying land in the beginning of 1877, and selling it shortly after the Annexation.

On the 24th May, being Her Majesty's birthday, all the native chiefs who were anywhere within reach were summoned to attend the first formal hoisting of the English flag. The day was a general festival, and the ceremony was attended by a large number of Boers and natives in addition to all the English. At midday, amidst the cheers of the crowd, the salute of artillery, and the strains of "God save the Queen," the Union Jack was run up a lofty flagstaff, and the Transvaal was formally announced to be British soil. The flag was hoisted by Colonel Brooke, R.E., and the present writer. Speaking for myself, I may say that

it was one of the proudest moments of my life. Could I have foreseen that I should live to see that same flag, then hoisted with so much joyous ceremony, within a few years shamefully and dishonourably hauled down and buried,[1] I think it would have been the most miserable.

The Annexation was as well received in England as it was in the Transvaal. Lord Carnarvon wrote to Sir T. Shepstone to convey "the Queen's entire approval of your conduct since you received Her Majesty's commission, with a renewal of my own thanks on behalf of the Government for the admirable prudence and discretion with which you have discharged a great and unwonted responsibility." It was also accepted by Parliament with very few dissentient voices, since it was not till afterwards, when the subject became useful as an electioneering howl, that the Liberal party, headed by our "powerful popular minister," discovered the deep iniquity that had been perpetrated in South Africa. So satisfied were the Transvaal Boers with the change that Messrs. Kruger, Jorissen, and Bok, who formed the deputation to proceed to England and present President Burgers' formal protest against the Annexation, found great difficulty in raising one-half of the necessary expenses—something under one thousand pounds—towards the cost of the undertaking. The thirst for independence cannot have been very great when all the wealthy burghers in the Transvaal put together would not subscribe a thousand pounds towards retaining it. Indeed, at this time the members of the deputation themselves seem to have looked upon their

[1] The English flag was during the signing of the Convention at Pretoria formally buried by a large crowd of Englishmen and loyal natives.

undertaking as being both doubtful and undesirable, since they informed Sir T. Shepstone that they were going to Europe to discharge an obligation which had been imposed upon them, and if the mission failed, they would have done their duty. Mr. Kruger said that if they did fail, he would be found to be as faithful a subject under the new form of government as he had been under the old; and Dr. Jorissen admitted with equal frankness that "the change was inevitable, and expressed his belief that the cancellation of it would be calamitous."

Whilst the Annexation was thus well received in the country immediately interested, a lively agitation was commenced in the Western Province of the Cape Colony, a thousand miles away, with a view of inducing the Home Government to repudiate Sir T. Shepstone's act. The reason of this movement was that the Cape Dutch party, caring little or nothing for the real interests of the Transvaal, did care a great deal about their scheme to turn all the white communities of South Africa into a great Dutch Republic, to which they thought the Annexation would be a deathblow. As I have said elsewhere, it must be borne in mind that the strings of the anti-annexation agitation have all along been pulled in the Western Province, whilst the Transvaal Boers have played the parts of puppets. The instruments used by the leaders of the movement in the Cape were, for the most part, the discontented and unprincipled Hollander element, a newspaper of an extremely abusive nature called the *Volkstem*, and another in Natal known as the *Natal Witness*, lately edited by the notorious Aylward, which has an almost equally unenviable reputation.

On the arrival of Messrs. Jorissen and Kruger in England, they were received with great civility by Lord Carnarvon, who was, however, careful to explain to them that the Annexation was irrevocable. In this decision they cheerfully acquiesced, assuring his lordship of their determination to do all they could to induce the Boers to accept the new state of things, and expressing their desire to be allowed to serve under the new Government.

Whilst these gentlemen were thus satisfactorily arranging matters with Lord Carnarvon, Sir. T. Shepstone was making a tour round the country which resembled a triumphal progress more than anything else. He was everywhere greeted with enthusiasm by all classes of the community, Boers, English, and natives, and numerous addresses were presented to him couched in the warmest language, not only by Englishmen, but also by Boers.

It is very difficult to reconcile the enthusiasm of a great number of the inhabitants of the Transvaal for English rule, and the quiet acquiescence of the remainder, at this time, with the decidedly antagonistic attitude assumed later on. It appears to me, however, that there are several reasons that go far towards accounting for it. The Transvaal, when we annexed it, was in the position of a man with a knife at his throat, who is suddenly rescued by some one stronger than he, on certain conditions which at the time he gladly accepts, but afterwards, when the danger is passed, wishes to repudiate. In the same way the inhabitants of the South African Republic were in the time of need very thankful for our aid, but after a while, when the recollection of their difficulties had grown faint, when their debts

had been paid and their enemies defeated, they began to think that they would like to get rid of us again, and start fresh on their own account with a clean sheet. What fostered agitation more than anything else, however, was the perfect impunity with which it was allowed to be carried on. Had only a little firmness and decision been shown in the first instance there would have been no further trouble. We might have been obliged to confiscate half-a-dozen farms, and perhaps imprison as many free burghers for a few months, and there it would have ended. Neither Boers or natives understand our namby-pamby way of playing at government; they put it down to fear. What they want, and what they expect, is to be governed with a just but a firm hand. Thus when the Boers found that they could agitate with impunity, they naturally enough continued to agitate. Anybody who knows them will understand that it was very pleasant to them to find themselves in possession of that delightful thing, a grievance, and, instead of stopping quietly at home on their farms, to feel obliged to proceed, full of importance and long words, to a distant meeting, there to spout and listen to the spouting of others. It is so much easier to talk politics than to sow mealies. Some attribute the discontent among the Boers to the postponement of the carrying out of the Annexation proclamation promises with reference to the free institutions to be granted to the country, but in my opinion it had little or nothing to do with it. The Boers never understood the question of responsible government, and never wanted that institution; what they did want was to be free of all English control, and this they said twenty times in the most outspoken language. I think there is little doubt

the causes I have indicated are the real sources of the agitation, though there must be added to them their detestation of our mode of dealing with natives, and of being forced to pay taxes regularly, and also the ceaseless agitation of the Cape wire-pullers, through their agents the Hollanders, and their organs in the press.

On the return of Messrs. Kruger and Jorissen to the Transvaal, the latter gentleman resumed his duties as Attorney-General, on which occasion, if I remember aright, I myself had the honour of administering to him the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty, that he afterwards kept so well. The former reported the proceedings of the deputation to a Boer meeting, when he took a very different tone to that in which he addressed Lord Carnarvon, announcing that if there existed a majority of the people in favour of independence, he still was Vice-President of the country.

Both these gentlemen remained for some time in the pay of the British Government, Mr. Jorissen as Attorney-General, and Mr. Kruger as member of the Executive Council. The Government, however, at length found it desirable to dispense with their services, though on different grounds. Mr. Jorissen had, like several other members of the Republican Government, been a clergyman, and was quite unfit to hold the post of Attorney-General in an important colony like the Transvaal, where legal questions were constantly arising requiring all the attention of a trained mind; and after he had on several occasions been publicly admonished from the bench, the Government retired him on liberal terms. Needless to say, his opposition to English rule then became very bitter. Mr. Kruger's appointment expired by law in November 1877, and the Government

did not think it advisable to re-employ him. The terms of his letter of dismissal can be found on page 135 of Blue-book (c. 144), and involving as they do a serious charge of misrepresentation in money matters, are not very creditable to him. After this event he also pursued the cause of independence with increased vigour.

During the last months of 1877 and the first part of 1878 agitation against British rule went on unchecked, and at last grew to alarming proportions, so much so that Sir T. Shepstone, on his return from the Zulu border in March 1878, where he had been for some months discussing the vexed and dangerous question of the boundary line with the Zulus, found it necessary to issue a stringent proclamation warning the agitators that their proceedings and meetings were illegal, and would be punished according to law. This document, which was at the time vulgarly known as the "Hold-your-jaw" proclamation, not being followed by action, produced but little effect.

On the 4th April 1878 another Boer meeting was convened, at which it was decided to send a second deputation to England, to consist this time of Messrs. Kruger and Joubert, with Mr. Bok as secretary. This deputation proved as abortive as the first, Sir. M. Hicks Beach assuring it, in a letter dated 6th August 1878, that it is "impossible, for many reasons, . . . that the Queen's sovereignty should now be withdrawn."

Whilst the Government was thus hampered by internal disaffection, it had also many other difficulties on its hands. First, there was the Zulu boundary question, which was constantly developing new dangers to the country. Indeed, it was impossible to say what

might happen in that direction from one week to another. Nor were its relations with Secocœni satisfactory. It will be remembered that just before the Annexation this chief had expressed his earnest wish to become a British subject, and even paid over part of the fine demanded from him by the Boer Government to the Civil Commissioner, Major Clarke. In March 1878, however, his conduct towards the Government underwent a sudden change, and he practically declared war. It afterwards appeared, from Secocœni's own statement, that he was instigated to this step by a Boer, Abel Erasmus by name—the same man who was concerned in the atrocities in the first Secocœni war—who constantly encouraged him to continue the struggle. I do not propose to minutely follow the course of this long war, which, commencing in the beginning of 1878, did not come to an end till after the Zulu war: when Sir Garnet Wolseley attacked Secocœni's stronghold with a large force of troops, volunteers, and Swazi allies, and took it with great slaughter. The losses on our side were not very heavy, so far as white men were concerned, but the Swazis are reported to have lost 400 killed and 500 wounded.

The struggle was, during the long period preceding the final attack, carried on with great courage and ability by Major Clarke, R.A., C.M.G., whose force, at the best of times, only consisted of 200 volunteers and 100 Zulus. With this small body of men he contrived, however, to keep Secocœni in check, and to take some important strongholds. It was marked also by some striking acts of individual bravery, of which one, performed by Major Clarke himself, whose reputation for cool courage and presence of mind in danger is unsur-

passed in South Africa, is worthy of notice; and which, had public attention been more concentrated on the Secocœni war, would doubtless have won him the Victoria Cross. On one occasion, on visiting one of the outlying forts, he found that a party of hostile natives, who were coming down to the fort on the previous day with a flag of truce, had been accidentally fired on, and had at once retreated. As his system in native warfare was always to try and inspire his enemy with perfect faith in the honour of Englishmen, and their contempt of all tricks and treachery even towards a foe, he was very angry at this occurrence, and at once, unarmed and unattended save by his native servant, rode up into the mountains to the kraal from which the white flag party had come on the previous day, and apologised to the chief for what had happened. When I consider how very anxious Secocœni's natives were to kill or capture Clarke, whom they held in great dread, and how terrible the end of so great a captain would in all probability have been had he been taken alive by these masters of refined torture, I confess that I think this act of gentlemanly courage is one of the most astonishing things I ever heard of. When he rode up those hills he must have known that he was probably going to meet his death at the hands of justly incensed savages. When Secocœni heard of what Major Clarke had done he was so pleased that he shortly afterwards released a volunteer whom he had taken prisoner, and who would otherwise, in all probability, have been tortured to death. I must add that Major Clarke himself never reported or alluded to this incident, but an account of it can be found in a despatch written by Sir O. Lanyon to the Secretary of State, dated 2d February 1880.

Concurrently with, though entirely distinct from, the political agitation that was being carried on among the Boers having for object the restoration of independence, a private agitation was set on foot by a few disaffected persons against Sir T. Shepstone, with the view of obtaining his removal from office in favour of a certain Colonel Weatherley. The details of this impudent plot are so interesting, and the plot itself so typical of the state of affairs with which Sir T. Shepstone had to deal, that I will give a short account of it.

After the Annexation had taken place, there were naturally enough a good many individuals who found themselves disappointed in the results so far as they personally were concerned; I mean that they did not get so much out of it as they expected. Among these was a gentleman called Colonel Weatherley, who had come to the Transvaal as manager of a gold-mining company, but getting tired of that had taken a prominent part in the Annexation, and who, being subsequently disappointed about an appointment, became a bitter enemy of the Administrator. I may say at once that Colonel Weatherley seems to me to have been throughout the dupe of the other conspirators.

The next personage was a good-looking desperado, who called himself Captain Gunn of Gunn, and who was locally somewhat irreverently known as the very Gunn of very Gunn. This gentleman, whose former career had been of a most remarkable order, was, on the annexation of the country, found in the public prison charged with having committed various offences, but on Colonel Weatherley's interesting himself strongly on his behalf, he was eventually released without trial. On his release, he requested the Administrator to pub-

lish a Government notice declaring him innocent of the charges brought against him. This Sir. T. Shepstone declined to do, and so, to use his own words, in a despatch to the High Commissioner on the subject, Captain Gunn of Gunn at once became "what in this country is called a patriot."

The third person concerned was a lawyer, who had got into trouble on the Diamond Fields, and who felt himself injured because the rules of the High Court did not allow him to practise as an advocate. The quartette was made up by Mr. Celliers, the editor of the patriotic organ, the *Volkstem*, who, since he had lost the Government printing contract, found that no language could be too strong to apply to the *personnel* of the Government, more especially its head. Of course, there was a lady in it; what plot would be complete without? She was Mrs. Weatherley, now, I believe, Mrs. Gunn of Gunn. These gentlemen began operations by drawing up a long petition to Sir Bartle Frere as High Commissioner, setting forth a string of supposed grievances, and winding up with a request that the Administrator might be "promoted to some other sphere of political usefulness." This memorial was forwarded by the "committee," as they called themselves, to various parts of the country for signature, but without the slightest success, the fact of the matter being that it was not the Annexor but the Annexation that the Boers objected to.

At this stage in the proceedings Colonel Weatherley went to try and forward the good cause with Sir Bartle Frere at the Cape. His letters to Mrs. Weatherley from thence, afterwards put into Court in the celebrated divorce case, contained many interesting accounts of

his attempts in that direction. I do not think, however, that he was cognisant of what was being concocted by his allies in Pretoria, but being a very vain, weak man, was easily deceived by them. With all his faults he was a gentleman. As soon as he was gone a second petition was drawn up by the "committee," showing "the advisability of immediately suspending our present Administrator, and temporarily appointing and recommending for Her Majesty's royal and favourable consideration an English gentleman of high integrity and honour, in whom the country at large has respect and confidence."

The English gentleman of high integrity and honour of course proves to be Colonel Weatherley, whose appointment is, further on, "respectfully but earnestly requested," since he had "thoroughly gained the affections, confidence, and respect of Boers, English, and other Europeans in this country." But whilst it is comparatively easy to write petitions, there is sometimes a difficulty in getting people to sign them, as proved to be the case with reference to the documents under consideration. When the "committee" and the employés in the office of the *Volkstem* had affixed their valuable signatures it was found to be impossible to induce anybody else to follow their example. Now, a petition with some half dozen signatures attached would not, it was obvious, carry much weight with the Imperial Government, and no more could be obtained.

But really great minds rise superior to such difficulties, and so did the "committee," or some of them, or one of them. If they could not get genuine signatures to their petitions, they could at any rate manufacture them. This great idea once hit out, so vigorously was

it prosecuted that they, or some of them, or one of them, produced in a very little while no less than 3883 signatures, of which sixteen were proved to be genuine, five were doubtful, and all the rest fictitious. But the gentleman, whoever he was, who was the working partner in the scheme—and I may state, by way of parenthesis, that when Gunn of Gunn was subsequently arrested, petitions in process of signature were found under the mattress of his bed—calculated without his host. He either did not know, or had forgotten, that on receipt of such documents by a superior officer, they are at once sent to the officer accused to report upon. This course was followed in the present case, and the petitions were discovered to be gross impostures. The ingenuity exercised by their author or authors was really very remarkable, for it must be remembered that not one of the signatures was forged; they were all invented, and had, of course, to be written in a great variety of hands. The plan generally pursued was to put down the names of people living in the country, with slight variations. Thus "De *V*illiers" became "De *W*illiers," and "Van *Zy*l" "Van *Za*l." I remember that my own name appeared on one of the petitions with some slight alteration. Some of the names were evidently meant to be facetious. Thus there was a "Jan Verneuker," which means "John the Cheat."

Of the persons directly or indirectly concerned in this rascally plot, the unfortunate Colonel Weatherley subsequently apologised to Sir T. Shepstone for his share in the agitation, and shortly afterwards died fighting bravely on Kambula. Captain Gunn of Gunn and Mrs. Weatherley, after having given rise to the most remarkable divorce case I ever heard—it took fourteen

days to try—were, on the death of Colonel Weatherley, united in the bonds of holy matrimony, and are, I believe, still in Pretoria. The lawyer vanished I know not where, whilst Mr. Celliers still continues to edit that admirably conducted journal the *Volkstem;* nor, if I may judge from the report of a speech made by him recently at a Boer festival, which, by the way, was graced by the presence of our representative, Mr. Hudson, the British Resident, has his right hand forgotten its cunning, or rather his tongue lost the use of those peculiar and *recherché* epithets that used to adorn the columns of the *Volkstem.* I see that he, on this occasion, denounced the English element as being "poisonous and dangerous" to a State, and stated, amidst loud cheers, that "he despised" it. Mr. Cellier's lines have fallen in pleasant places; in any other country he would long ago have fallen a victim to the stern laws of libel. I recommend him to the notice of enterprising Irish newspapers. Such is the freshness and vigour of his style that I am confident he would make the fortune of any Hibernian journal.

Some little time after the Gunn of Gunn frauds a very sad incident happened in connection with the government of the Transvaal. Shortly after the Annexation, the Home Government sent out Mr. Sergeaunt, C.M.G., one of the Crown Agents for the Colonies, to report on the financial condition of the country. He was accompanied, in an unofficial capacity, amongst other gentlemen, by Captain Patterson and his son, Mr. J. Sergeaunt; and when he returned to England, these two gentlemen remained behind to go on a shooting expedition. About this time Sir Bartle Frere was anxious to send a friendly mission to Lo Bengula, king of the Matabele, a branch of

the Zulu tribe, living up towards the Zambesi. This chief had been making himself unpleasant by causing traders to be robbed, and it was thought desirable to establish friendly relations with him, so it was suggested to Captain Patterson and Mr. Sergeaunt that they should combine business with pleasure, and go on a mission to Lo Bengula, an offer which they accepted, and shortly afterwards started for Matabeleland with an interpreter and a few servants. They reached their destination in safety; and having concluded their business with the king, started on a visit to the Zambesi Falls on foot, leaving the interpreter with the waggon. The falls were about twelve days' walk from the king's kraal, and they were accompanied thither by young Mr. Thomas, the son of the local missionary, two Kafir servants, and twenty native bearers supplied by Lo Bengula. The next thing that was heard of them was that they had all died through drinking poisoned water, full details of the manner of their deaths being sent down by Lo Bengula.

In the first shock and confusion of such news it was not very closely examined, at any rate by the friends of the dead men, but, on reflection, there were several things about it that appeared strange. For instance, it was well known that Captain Patterson had a habit, for which, indeed, we had often laughed at him, of, however thirsty he might be, always having his water boiled when he was travelling, in order to destroy impurities, and it seemed odd that he should on this one occasion have neglected the precaution. Also, it was curious that the majority of Lo Bengula's bearers appeared to have escaped, whereas all the others were, without exception, killed; nor even in that district is

it usual to find water so bad that it will kill with the rapidity it had been supposed to do in this case, unless indeed it had been designedly poisoned. These doubts of the poisoning-by-bad-water-story resolved themselves into certainty when the waggon returned in charge of the interpreter, when, by putting two and two together, we were able to piece out the real history of the diabolical murder of our poor friends with considerable accuracy, a story which shows what blood thirsty wickedness a savage is capable of when h fancies his interests are threatened.

It appeared that, when Captain Patterson first interviewed Lo Bengula, he was not at all well received by him. I must, by way of explanation, state that there exists a pretender to his throne, Kruman by name, who, as far as I can make out, is the real heir to the kingdom. This man had, for some cause or other, fled the country, and for a time acted as gardener to Sir T. Shepstone in Natal. At the date of Messrs. Patterson and Sergeaunt's mission to Matabeleland he was living, I believe, in the Transvaal. Captain Patterson, on finding himself so ill received by the king, and not being sufficiently acquainted with the character of savage chiefs, most unfortunately, either by accident or design, dropped some hint in the course of conversation about this Kruman. From that moment Lo Bengula's conduct towards the mission entirely changed, and, dropping his former tone, he became profusely civil; and from that moment, too, he doubtless determined to kill them, probably fearing that they might forward some scheme to oust him and place Kruman, on whose claim a large portion of his people looked favourably, on the throne.

When their business was done, and Captain Patterson told the king that they were anxious, before returning, to visit the Zambesi Falls, he readily fell in with their wish, but, in the first instance, refused permission to young Thomas, the son of the missionary, to accompany them, only allowing him to do so on the urgent representations of Captain Patterson. The reason of this was, no doubt, that he had kindly feelings towards the lad, and did not wish to include him in the slaughter.

Captain Patterson was a man of extremely methodical habits, and, amongst other things, was in the habit of making notes of all that he did. His note-book had been taken off his body, and sent down to Pretoria with the other things. In it we found entries of his preparations for the trip, including the number and names of the bearers provided by Lo Bengula. We also found the chronicle of the first three days' journey, and that of the morning of the fourth day, but there the record stopped. The last entry was probably made a few minutes before he was killed; and it is to be observed that there was no entry of the party having been for several days without water, as stated by the messengers, and then finding the poisoned water.

This evidence by itself would not have amounted to much, but now comes the curious part of the story, showing the truth of the old adage, "Murder will out." It appears that when the waggon was coming down to Pretoria in charge of the interpreter, it was outspanned one day outside the borders of Lo Bengula's country, when some Kafirs—Bechuanas, I think—came up, asked for some tobacco, and fell into conversation with the driver, remarking that he had come up with a full

waggon, and now he went down with an empty one. The driver replied by lamenting the death by poisoned water of his masters, whereupon one of the Kafirs told him the following story:—He said that a brother of his was out hunting, a little while back, in the desert for ostriches, with a party of other Kafirs, when hearing shots fired some way off, they made for the spot, thinking that white men were out shooting, and that they would be able to beg meat. On reaching the spot, which was by a pool of water, they saw the bodies of three white men lying on the ground, and also those of a Hottentot and a Kafir, surrounded by an armed party of Kafirs. They at once asked the Kafirs what they had been doing killing the white men, and were told to be still, for it was by "order of the king." They then learned the whole story. It appeared that the white men had made a mid-day halt by the water, when one of the bearers, who had gone to the edge of the pool, suddenly shouted to them to come and look at a great snake in the water. Captain Patterson ran up, and, as he leaned over the edge, was instantly killed by a blow with an axe; the others were then shot and assegaied. The Kafir further described the clothes that his brother had seen on the bodies, and also some articles that had been given to his party by the murderers, that left little doubt as to the veracity of his story. And so ended the mission to Matabeleland.

No public notice was taken of the matter, for the obvious reason that it was impossible to get at Lo Bengula to punish him; nor would it have been easy to come by legal evidence to disprove the ingenious story of the poisoned water, since anybody trying to reach the spot of the massacre would probably fall a victim

to some similar accident before he got back again. It is devoutly to be hoped that the punishment he deserves will sooner or later overtake the author of this devilish and wholesale murder.

The beginning of 1879 was signalised by the commencement of operations in Zululand and by the news of the terrible disaster at Isandhlwana, which fell on Pretoria like a thunderclap. It was not, however, any surprise to those who were acquainted with Zulu tactics and with the plan of attack adopted by the English commanders. In fact, I know that one solemn warning of what would certainly happen to him if he persisted in his plan of advance was addressed to Lord Chelmsford, through the officer in command at Pretoria, by a gentleman whose position and long experience of the Zulus and their mode of attack should have carried some weight. If it ever reached him, he took, to the best of my recollection, no notice of it whatever.

But though some such disaster was daily expected by a few, the majority both of soldiers and civilians never dreamed of anything of the sort, the general idea being that the conquest of Cetywayo was a very easy undertaking; and the shock produced by the news of Isandhlwana was proportionately great, especially as it reached Pretoria in a much exaggerated form. I shall never forget the appearance of the town that morning; business was entirely suspended, and the streets were filled with knots of men talking, with scared faces, as well they might: for there was scarcely anybody but had lost a friend, and many thought that their sons or brothers were among the dead on that bloody field. Among others, Sir T. Shepstone lost one son, and thought for some time that he had lost three.

Shortly after this event Sir Theophilus went to England to confer with the Secretary of State on various matters connected with the Transvaal, carrying with him the affection and respect of all who knew him, not excepting the majority of the malcontent Boers. He was succeeded by Colonel, now Sir Owen Lanyon, who was appointed to administer the Government during the absence of Sir T. Shepstone.

By the Boers, however, the news of our disaster was received with great and unconcealed rejoicing, or at least by the irreconcilable portion of that people. England's necessity was their opportunity, and one of which they certainly meant to avail themselves. Accordingly, notices were sent out summoning the burghers of the Transvaal to attend a mass meeting on the 18th March, at a place about thirty miles from Pretoria. Emissariés were also sent to native chiefs, to excite them to follow Cetywayo's example, and massacre all the English within reach, of whom a man called Solomon Prinsloo was one of the most active. The natives, however, notwithstanding the threats used towards them, one and all declined the invitation.

It must not be supposed that all the Boers who attended these meetings did so of their own free will; on the contrary, a very large number came under compulsion, since they found that the English authorities were powerless to give them protection. The recalcitrants were threatened with all sorts of pains and penalties if they did not attend, a favourite menace being that they should be made "biltong" of when the country was given back (*i.e.*, be cut into strips and hung in the sun to dry). Few, luckily for themselves, were brave enough to tempt fortune by refusing

to come, but those who did have had to leave the country since the war. Whatever were the means employed, the result was an armed meeting of about 3000 Boers, who evidently meant mischief.

Just about this time a corps had been raised in Pretoria, composed, for the most part, of gentlemen, and known as the Pretoria Horse, for the purpose of proceeding to the Zulu border, where cavalry, especially cavalry acquainted with the country, was earnestly needed. In the emergency of the times officials were allowed to join this corps, a permission of which I availed myself, and was elected one of the lieutenants.[1] The corps was not, after all, allowed to go to Zululand on account of the threatening aspect adopted by the Boers, against whom it was retained for service. In my capacity as an officer of the corps I was sent out with a small body of picked men, all good riders and light weights, to keep up a constant communication between the Boer camp and the Administrator, and found the work both interesting and exciting. My headquarters were at an inn about twenty-five miles from Pretoria, to which our agents in the meeting used to come every evening and report how matters were proceeding, whereupon, if the road was clear, I despatched a letter to headquarters; or, if I feared that the messengers would be caught *en route* by Boer patrols and searched, I substituted different coloured ribbons according to what I wished to convey. There was a relief hidden in the trees or rocks every six miles, all

[1] It is customary in South African volunteer forces to allow the members to elect their own officers, provided the men elected are such as the Government approves. This is done, so that the corps may not afterwards be able to declare that they have no confidence in their officers in action, or to grumble at their treatment by them.

day and most of the night, whose business it was to take the despatch or ribbon and gallop on with it to the next station, in which way we used to get the despatches into town in about an hour and a quarter.

On one or two occasions the Boers came to the inn and threatened to shoot us, but as our orders were to do nothing unless our lives were actually in danger, we took no notice. The officer who came out to relieve me had not, however, been there more than a day or two before he and all his troopers were hunted back into Pretoria by a large mob of armed Boers whom they only escaped by very hard riding.

Meanwhile the Boers were by degrees drawing nearer and nearer to the town, till at last they pitched their laagers within six miles, and practically besieged it. All business was stopped, the houses were loopholed and fortified, and advantageous positions were occupied by the military and the various volunteer corps. The building, normally in the occupation of the Government mules, fell to the lot of the Pretoria Horse, and, though it was undoubtedly a post of honour, I honestly declare that I have no wish to sleep for another month in a mule stable that has not been cleaned out for several years. However, by sinking a well, and erecting bastions and a staging for sharpshooters, we converted it into an excellent fortress, though it would not have been of much use against artillery. Our patrols used to be out all night, since we chiefly feared a night attack, and generally every preparati n was made to resist the onset that was hourly expected, and I believe that it was that state of preparedness that alone prevented it.

Whilst this meeting was going on, and when matters

had come to a point that seemed to render war inevitable, Sir Bartle Frere arrived at Pretoria and had several interviews with the Boer leaders, at which they persisted in demanding their independence, and nothing short of it. After a great deal of talk the meeting finally broke up without any actual appeal to arms, though it had, during its continuance, assumed many of the rights of government, such as stopping post-carts and individuals, and sending armed patrols about the country. The principal reason of its break-up was that the Zulu war was now drawing to a close, and the leaders saw that there would soon be plenty of troops available to suppress any attempt at revolt, but they also saw to what lengths they could go with impunity. They had for a period of nearly two months been allowed to throw the whole country into confusion, to openly violate the laws, and to intimidate and threaten Her Majesty's loyal subjects with war and death. The lesson was not lost on them; but they postponed action till a more favourable opportunity offered.

Sir Bartle Frere before his departure took an opportunity at a public dinner given him at Potchefstroom of assuring the loyal inhabitants of the country that the Transvaal would never be given back.

Meanwhile a new Pharaoh had arisen in Egypt, in the shape of Sir Garnet Wolseley, and on the 29th June 1879 we find him communicating the fact to Sir O. Lanyon in very plain language, telling him that he disapproved of his course of action with regard to Secocœni, and that "in future you will please take orders only from me."

As soon as Sir Garnet had completed his arrangements for the pacification of Zululand, he proceeded

to Prětoria, and having caused himself to be sworn in as Governor, set vigorously to work. I must say that in his dealings with the Transvaal he showed great judgment and a keen appreciation of what the country needed, namely, strong government; the fact of the matter being, I suppose, that being very popular with the Home authorities he felt that he could more or less command their support in what he did, a satisfaction not given to most governors, who never know but that they may be thrown overboard in emergency to lighten the ship.

One of his first acts was to issue a proclamation, stating that, "Whereas it appears that, notwithstanding repeated assurances of contrary effect given by Her Majesty's representatives in this territory, uncertainty or misapprehension exists amongst some of Her Majesty's subjects as to the intention of Her Majesty's Government regarding the maintenance of British rule and sovereignty over the territory of the Transvaal: and whereas it is expedient that all grounds for such uncertainty or misapprehension should be removed once and for all beyond doubt or question: now therefore I do hereby proclaim and make known, in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, that it is the will and determination of Her Majesty's Government that this Transvaal territory shall be, *and shall continue to be for ever*, an integral portion of Her Majesty's dominions in South Africa."

Alas! Sir G. Wolseley's estimate of the value of a solemn pledge thus made in the name of Her Majesty, whose word has hitherto been held to be sacred, differed greatly to that of Mr. Gladstone and his Government.

Sir Garnet Wolseley's operations against Secocœni

proved eminently successful, and were the best arranged bit of native warfare that I have yet heard of in South Africa. One blow was struck, and only one, but that was crushing. Of course the secret of his success lay in the fact that he had an abundance of force; but it was not ensured by that alone, good management being very requisite in an affair of the sort, especially where native allies have to be dealt with. The cost of the expedition, not counting other Secocœni war expenditure, amounted to over £300,000, all of which is now lost to this country.

Another step in the right direction undertaken by Sir Garnet was the establishment of an Executive Council and also of a Legislative Council, for the establishment of which Letters Patent were sent from Downing Street in November 1880.

Meanwhile the Boers, paying no attention to the latter proclamation, for they guessed that it, like other proclamations in the Transvaal, would be a mere *brutum fulmen*, had assembled for another mass meeting, at which they went forward a step, and declared a Government which was to treat with the English authorities. They had now learnt that they could do what they liked with perfect impunity, provided they did not take the extreme course of massacring the English. They had yet to learn that they might even do that. At the termination of this meeting, a vote of thanks was passed to "Mr. Leonard Courtney of London, and other members of the British Parliament." It was wise of the Boer leaders to cultivate Mr. Courtney of London. As a result of this meeting, Pretorius, one of the principal leaders, and Bok, the secretary, were arrested on a charge of treason, and

underwent a preliminary examination; but as the Secretary of State, Sir M. Hicks Beach, looked rather timidly on the proceeding, and the local authorities were doubtful of securing a verdict, the prosecution was abandoned, and necessarily did more harm than good, being looked upon as another proof of the impotence of the Government.

Shortly afterwards, Sir G. Wolseley changed his tactics, and, instead of attempting to imprison Pretorius, offered him a seat on the Executive Council, with a salary attached. This was a much more sensible way of dealing with him, and he at once rose to the bait, stating his willingness to join the Government after a while, but that he could not publicly do so at the moment lest he should lose his influence with those who were to be brought round through him. It does not, however, appear that Mr. Pretorius ever did actually join the Executive, probably because he found public opinion too strong to allow him to do so.

In December 1879 a new light broke upon the Boers, for in the previous month Mr. Gladstone had been delivering his noted attack on the policy of the Conservative Government. Those Mid-Lothian speeches did harm, it is said, in many parts of the world; but I venture to think that they have proved more mischievous in South Africa than anywhere else; at any rate, they have borne fruit sooner. It is not to be supposed that Mr. Gladstone really cared anything about the Transvaal or its independence when he was denouncing the hideous outrage that had been perpetrated by the Conservative Government in annexing it. On the contrary, as he acquiesced in the Annexa-

tion at the time (when Lord Kimberley stated that it was evidently unavoidable), and declined to rescind it when he came into power, it is to be supposed that he really approved of it, or at the least looked on it as a necessary evil. However this may be, any stick will do to beat a dog with, and the Transvaal was a convenient point on which to attack the Government. He probably neither knew nor cared what effect his reckless words might have on ignorant Boers thousands of miles away; and yet, humanly speaking, many a man would have been alive and strong to-day whose bones now whiten the African Veldt had those words never been spoken. Then, for the first time, the Boers learnt that, if they played their cards properly and put on sufficient pressure, they would, in the event of the Liberal party coming to office, have little difficulty in coercing it as they wished.

There was a fair chance at the time of the utterance of the Mid-Lothian speeches that the agitation would, by degrees, die away; Sir G. Wolseley had succeeded in winning over Pretorius, and the Boers in general were sick of mass meetings. Indeed, a memorial was addressed to Sir. G. Wolseley by a number of Boers in the Potchefstroom district, protesting against the maintenance of the movement against Her Majesty's rule, which, considering the great amount of intimidation exercised by the malcontents, may be looked upon as a favourable sign.

But when it slowly came to be understood among the Boers that a great English Minister had openly espoused their cause, and that he would perhaps soon be all-powerful, the moral gain to them was incalculable. They could now go to the doubting ones and

say,—we must be right about the matter, because, putting our own feelings out of the question, the great Gladstone says we are. We find the committee of the Boer malcontents, at their meeting in March 1880, reading a letter to Mr. Gladstone, "in which he was thanked for the great sympathy shown in their fate," and a hope expressed that, if he succeeded in getting power, he would not forget them. In fact, a charming unanimity prevailed between our great Minister and the Boer rebels, for their interests were the same, the overthrow of the Conservative Government. If, however, every leader of the Opposition were to intrigue or countenance intrigues with those who are seeking to undermine the authority of Her Majesty, whether they be Boers or Irishmen, in order to help himself to power, the country might suffer in the long run.

But whatever feelings may have prompted Her Majesty's Opposition, the Home Government, and their agent, Sir Garnet Wolseley, blew no uncertain blast, if we may judge from their words and actions. Thus we find Sir Garnet speaking as follows at a banquet given in his honour at Pretoria:—

"I am told that these men (the Boers) are told to keep on agitating in this way, for a change of Government in England may give them again the old order of things. Nothing can show greater ignorance of English politics than such an idea; I tell you that there is no Government, Whig or Tory, Liberal, Conservative, or Radical, *who would dare under any circumstances to give back this country*. They would not dare, because the English people would not allow them. To give back the country, what would it mean? To give it back to external danger, to the danger of attack by

hostile tribes on its frontier, and who, if the English Government were removed for one day, would make themselves felt the next. Not an official of Government paid for months; it would mean national bankruptcy. No taxes being paid, the same thing recurring again which had existed before would mean danger without, anarchy and civil war within, every possible misery; the strangulation of trade, and the destruction of property."

It is very amusing to read this passage by the light of after events. On other occasions Sir Garnet Wolseley will probably not be quite so confident as to the future when it is to be controlled by a Radical Government.

This explicit and straightforward statement of Sir Garnet's produced a great effect on the loyal inhabitants of the Transvaal, which was heightened by the publication of the following telegram from the Secretary of State:—"You may fully confirm explicit statements made from time to time as to inability of Her Majesty's Government to entertain *any proposal* for withdrawal of the Queen's sovereignty."

On the faith of these declarations many Englishmen migrated to the Transvaal and settled there, whilst those who were in the country now invested all their means, being confident that they would not lose their property through its being returned to the Boers. The excitement produced by Mr. Gladstone's speeches began to quiet down and be forgotten for the time, arrear taxes were paid up by the malcontents, and generally the aspect of affairs was such, in Sir Garnet Wolseley's opinion, as justified him in writing, in April 1880, to the Secretary of State expressing his belief that the

agitation was dying out.[1] Indeed, so sanguine was he on that point that he is reported to have advised the withdrawal of the cavalry regiment stationed in the territory, a piece of economy that was one of the immediate causes of the revolt.

The reader will remember the financial condition of the country at the time of the Annexation, which was one of utter bankruptcy. After three years of British rule, however, we find, notwithstanding the constant agitation that had been kept up, that the total revenue receipts for the first quarter of 1879 and 1880 amounted to £22,773 and £47,982 respectively. That is to say, that, during the last year of British rule, the revenue of the country more than doubled itself, and amounted to

[1] In Blue-Book No. (C. 2866) of September 1881, which is descriptive of various events connected with the Boer rising, is published, as an appendix, a despatch from Sir Garnet Wolseley, dated October 1879. This despatch declares the writer's opinion that the Boer discontent is on the increase. Its publication thus—*apropos des bottes*—nearly two years after it was written, is rather an amusing incident. It certainly gives one the idea that Sir Garnet Wolseley, fearing that his reputation for infallibility might be attacked by scoffers for not having foreseen the Boer rebellion, and perhaps uneasily conscious of other despatches very different in tenor and subsequent in date: and, mindful of the withdrawal of the cavalry regiment by his advice, had caused it to be tacked on to the Blue-Book as a documentary "I told you so," and a proof that, whoever else was blinded, he foresaw. It contains, however, the following remarkably true passage:—"Even were it not impossible, for many other reasons, to contemplate a withdrawal of our authority from the Transvaal, the position of insecurity in which we should leave this loyal and important section of the community (the English inhabitants), by exposing them to the certain retaliation of the Boers, would constitute, in my opinion, an insuperable obstacle to retrocession. Subjected to the same danger, moreover, would be those of the Boers, whose superior intelligence and courageous character has rendered them loyal to our Government."

As the Government took the trouble to republish the despatch, it is a pity that they did not think fit to pay more attention to its contents.

about £160,000 a-year, taking the quarterly returns at the low average of £40,000. It must, however, be remembered that this sum would have been very largely increased in subsequent years, most probably doubled. At any rate the revenue would have been amply sufficient to make the province one of the most prosperous in South Africa, and to have enabled it to shortly repay all debts due to the British Government, and further to provide for its own defence. Trade also, which, in April 1877, was completely paralysed, had increased enormously. So early as the middle of 1879, the Committee of the Transvaal Chamber of Commerce pointed out, in a resolution adopted by them, that the trade of the country had in two years risen from almost nothing to the considerable sum of two millions sterling per annum, and that it was entirely in the hands of those favourable to British rule. They also pointed out that more than half the land-tax was paid by Englishmen, or other Europeans adverse to Boer Government. Land, too, had risen greatly in value, of which I can give the following instance. About a year after the Annexation I, together with a friend, bought a little property on the outskirts of Pretoria, which, with a cottage we put up on it, cost some £300. Just before the rebellion we fortunately determined to sell it, and had no difficulty in getting £650 for it. I do not believe that it would now fetch a fifty-pound note.

I cannot conclude this chapter better than by drawing attention to a charming specimen of the correspondence between the Boer leaders and their friend Mr. Courtney. The letter in question, which is dated 26th June, purports to be written by Messrs. Kruger and Joubert, but it is obvious that it owes its origin to some

member or members of the Dutch party at the Cape, from whence, indeed, it is written. This is rendered evident both by its general style, and also by the use of such terms as "Satrap," and by references to Napoleon III. and Cayenne, about whom Messrs. Kruger and Joubert know no more than they do of Peru and the Incas.

After alluding to former letters, the writers blow a blast of triumph over the downfall of the Conservative Government, and then make a savage attack on the reputation of Sir Bartle Frere. The "stubborn Satrap" is throughout described as a liar, and every bad motive imputed to him. Really, the fact that Mr. Courtney should encourage such epistles as this is enough to give colour to the boast made by some of the leading Boers, after the war, that they had been encouraged to rebel by a member of the British Government.

At the end of this letter, and on the same page of the Blue-Book, is printed the telegram recalling Sir Bartle Frere, dated 1st August 1880. It really reads as though the second document was consequent on the first. One thing is very clear, the feelings of Her Majesty's new Government towards Sir Bartle Frere differed only in the method of their expression from those set forth by the Boer leaders in their letter to Mr. Courtney, whilst their object, namely, to be rid of him, was undoubtedly identical with that of the Dutch party in South Africa.

CHAPTER V.

THE BOER REBELLION.

WHEN the Liberal ministry became an accomplished fact instead of a happy possibility, Mr. Gladstone did not find it convenient to adopt the line of policy with reference to the Transvaal that might have been expected from his utterances whilst leader of the Opposition. On the contrary, he declared in Parliament that the Annexation could not be cancelled, and on the 8th June 1880 we find him, in answer to a Boer petition, written with the object of inducing him to act up to the spirit of his words and rescind the Annexation, writing thus: —"Looking to all the circumstances, both of the Transvaal and the rest of South Africa, and to the necessity of preventing a renewal of disorders which might lead to disastrous consequences, not only to the Transvaal, but to the whole of South Africa, our judgment is, that the *Queen cannot be advised to relinquish her sovereignty over the Transvaal;* but, consistently with the maintenance of that sovereignty, we desire that the white inhabitants of the Transvaal should, without prejudice to the rest of the population, enjoy the fullest liberty to manage their local affairs. We believe that this liberty may be most easily and promptly conceded to the Transvaal as a member of a South African confederation."

Unless words have lost their signification, this passage certainly means that the Transvaal must remain a British colony, but that England will be prepared to grant it responsible government, more especially if it will consent to a confederation scheme. Mr. Gladstone, however, in a communication dated 1st June 1881, and addressed to the unfortunate Transvaal loyals, for whom he expresses "respect and sympathy," interprets his meaning thus: "It is stated, as I observe, that a promise was given by me that the Transvaal never should be given back. There is no mention of the terms or date of this promise. If the reference be to my letter, of 8th June 1880, to Messrs. Kruger and Joubert, I do not think the language of that letter justifies the description given. Nor am I sure in what manner or to what degree the fullest liberty to manage their local affairs, which I then said Her Majesty's Government desired to confer on the white population of the Transvaal, differs from the settlement now about being made in its bearing on the interests of those whom your Committee represents."

Such twisting of the meaning of words would, in a private person, be called dishonest. It will also occur to most people that Mr. Gladstone might have spared the deeply wronged and loyal subjects of Her Majesty whom he was addressing the taunt he levels at them in the second paragraph I have quoted. If asked, he would no doubt say that he had not the slightest intention of laughing at them; but when he deliberately tells them that it makes no difference to their interests whether they remain Her Majesty's subjects under a responsible Government, or become the servants of men who were but lately in arms against them and Her

Majesty's authority, he is either mocking them, or offering an insult to their understandings.

By way of comment on his remarks, I may add that he had, in a letter replying to a petition from these same loyal inhabitants, addressed to him in May 1880, informed them that he had already told the Boer representatives that the Annexation could not be rescinded. Although Mr. Gladstone is undoubtedly the greatest living master of the art of getting two distinct and opposite sets of meanings out of one set of words, it would try even his ingenuity to make out, to the satisfaction of an impartial mind, that he never gave any pledge about the retention of the Transvaal.

Indeed, it is from other considerations clear that he had no intention of giving up the country to the Boers, whose cause he appears to have taken up solely for electioneering purposes. Had he meant to do so, he would have carried out his intention on succeeding to office, and, indeed, as things have turned out, it is deeply to be regretted that he did not; for, bad as such a step would have been, it would at any rate have had a better appearance than our ultimate surrender after three defeats. It would also have then been possible to secure the repayment of some of the money owing to this country, and to provide for the proper treatment of the natives, and the compensation of the loyal inhabitants who could no longer live there: since it must naturally have been easier to make terms with the Boers before they had defeated our troops.

On the other hand, we should have missed the grandest and most soul-stirring display of radical theories, practically applied, that has as yet lightened the darkness of this country. But although Mr. Gladstone gave his

official decision against returning the country, there seems to be little doubt that communications on the subject were kept up with the Boer leaders through some prominent members of the Radical party, who, it was said, went so far as to urge the Boers to take up arms against us. When Mr. White came to this country on behalf of the loyalists, after the surrender, he stated that this was so at a public meeting, and said further that he had in his possession proofs of his statements. He even went so far as to name the gentleman he accused, and to challenge him to deny it. I have not been able to gather that Mr. White's statements were contradicted.

However this may be, after a pause, agitation in the Transvaal suddenly recommenced with redoubled vigour. It began through a man named Bezeidenhout, who refused to pay his taxes. Thereupon a waggon was seized in execution under the authority of the court and put up to auction, but its sale was prevented by a crowd of rebel Boers, who kicked the auctioneer off the waggon and dragged the vehicle away. This was on the 11th November 1880. When this intelligence reached Pretoria, Sir Owen Lanyon sent down a few companies of the 21st Regiment, under the command of Major Thornhill, to support the Landdrost in arresting the rioters, and appointed Captain Raaf, C.M.G., to act as special messenger to the Landdrost's Court at Potchefstroom, with authority to enrol special constables to assist him to carry out the arrests. On arrival at Potchefstroom Captain Raaf found that, without an armed force, it was quite impossible to effect any arrest. On the 26th November Sir Owen Lanyon, realising the gravity of the situation, telegraphed to Sir George Colley, asking

that the 58th Regiment should be sent back to the Transvaal. Sir George replied that he could ill spare it on account of "daily expected outbreak of Pondos and possible appeal for help from Cape Colony," and that the Government must be supported by the loyal inhabitants.

It will be seen that the Boers had, with some astuteness, chosen a very favourable time to commence operations. The hands of the Cape Government were full with the Basuto war, so no help could be expected from it; Sir G. Wolseley had sent away the only cavalry regiment that remained in the country, and lastly, Sir Owen Lanyon had quite recently allowed a body of 300 trained volunteers, mostly, if not altogether, drawn from among the loyalists, to be raised for service in the Basuto war, a serious drain upon the resources of a country so sparsely populated as the Transvaal.

Meanwhile a mass meeting had been convened by the Boers for the 8th January to consider Mr. Gladstone's letter, but the Bezeidenhout incident had the effect of putting forward the date of assembly by a month, and it was announced that it would be held on the 8th December. Subsequently the date was shifted to the 15th, and then back again to the 8th. Every effort was made, by threats of future vengeance, to secure the presence of as many burghers as possible; attempts were also made to persuade the native chiefs to send representatives, and to promise to join in an attack on the English. These entirely failed. The meeting was held at a place called Paarde Kraal, and resulted in the sudden declaration of the Republic and the appointment of the famous triumvirate

Kruger, Joubert, and Pretorius. It then moved into Heidelberg, a little town about sixty miles from Pretoria, and on the 16th December the Republic was formally proclaimed in a long proclamation, containing a summary of the events of the few preceding years, and declaring the arrangements the malcontents were willing to make with the English authorities. The terms offered in this document are almost identical with those finally accepted by Her Majesty's Government, with the exception that in the proclamation of the 16th December the Boer leaders declare their willingness to enter into confederation, and to guide their native policy by general rules adopted in concurrence "with the Colonies and States of South Africa." This was a more liberal offer than that which we ultimately agreed to, but then the circumstances had changed.

This proclamation was forwarded to Sir Owen Lanyon with a covering letter, in which the following words occur:—"We declare in the most solemn manner that we have no desire to spill blood, and that from our side we do not wish war. It lies in your hands to force us to appeal to arms in self-defence. . . . We expect your answer within twice twenty-four hours."

I beg to direct particular attention to these paragraphs, as they have a considerable interest in view of what followed.

The letter and proclamation reached Government House, Pretoria, at 10.30 on the evening of Friday the 17th December. Sir Owen Lanyon's proclamation, written in reply, was handed to the messenger at noon on Sunday, 19th December, or within about

thirty-six hours of his arrival, and could hardly have reached the rebel camp, sixty miles off, before dawn the next day, the 20th December, on which day, at about one o'clock, a detachment of the 94th was ambushed and destroyed on the road between Middleburg and Pretoria, about eighty miles off, by a force despatched from Heidelberg for that purpose some days before. On the 16th December, or the *same day* on which the Triumvirate had despatched the proclamation to Pretoria containing their terms, and expressing in the most solemn manner that they had no desire to shed blood, a large Boer force was attacking Potchefstroom.

So much then for the sincerity of the professions of their desire to avoid bloodshed.

The proclamation sent by Sir O. Lanyon in reply recited in its preamble the various acts of which the rebels had been guilty, including that of having "wickedly sought to incite the said loyal native inhabitants throughout the province to take up arms against Her Majesty's Government," announced that matters had now been put into the hands of the officer commanding Her Majesty's troops, and promised pardon to all who would disperse to their homes.

It was at Potchefstroom, which town had all along been the nursery of the rebellion, that actual hostilities first broke out. Potchefstroom as a town is much more Boer in its sympathies than Pretoria, which is, or rather was, almost purely English. Sir Owen Lanyon had, as stated before, sent a small body of soldiers thither to support the civil authorities, and had also appointed Major Clarke, C.M.G., an officer

of noted coolness and ability, to act as Special Commissioner for the district.

Major Clarke's first step was to try, in conjunction with Captain Raaf, to raise a corps of volunteers, in which he totally failed. Those of the townsfolk who were not Boers at heart had too many business relations with the surrounding farmers, and perhaps too little faith in the stability of English rule after Mr. Gladstone's utterances, to allow them to indulge in patriotism. At the time of the outbreak, between seventy and eighty thousand sterling was owing to firms in Potchefstroom by neighbouring Boers, a sum amply sufficient to account for their lukewarmness in the English cause. Subsequent events have shown that the Potchefstroom shopkeepers were wise in their generation.

On the 15th December a large number of Boers came into the town and took possession of the printing-office in order to print the proclamation already alluded to. Major Clarke made two attempts to enter the office and see the leaders, but without success.

On the 16th a Boer patrol fired on some of the mounted infantry, and the fire was returned. These were the first shots fired during the war, and they were fired by Boers. Orders were thereupon signalled to Clarke by Lieutenant-Colonel Winsloe, 21st Regiment, now commanding at the fort which he afterwards defended so gallantly, that he was to commence firing. Clarke was in the Landdrost's office on the Market Square with a force of about twenty soldiers under Captain Falls and twenty civilians under Captain Raaf, C.M.G., a position but ill-suited for defensive purposes, from whence fire was accordingly opened,

the Boers taking up positions in the surrounding houses commanding the office. Shortly after the commencement of the fighting, Captain Falls was shot dead whilst talking to Major Clarke, the latter having a narrow escape, a bullet grazing his head just above the ear. The fighting continued during the 17th and till the morning of the 18th, when the Boers succeeded in firing the roof, which was of thatch, by throwing fire-balls on to it. Major Clarke then addressed the men, telling them that, though personally he did not care about his own life, he did not see that they could serve any useful purpose by being burned alive, so he should surrender, which he did, with a loss of about six killed and wounded. The camp meanwhile had repulsed with loss the attack made on it, and was never again directly attacked.

Whilst these events were in progress at Potchefstroom, a much more awful tragedy was in preparation on the road between Middleburg and Pretoria.

On the 23d November, Colonel Bellairs, at the request of Sir Owen Lanyon, directed a concentration on Pretoria of most of the few soldiers that there were in the territory, in view of the disturbed condition of the country. In accordance with these orders, Colonel Anstruther marched from Lydenburg, a town about 180 miles from Pretoria, on the 5th December, with the headquarters and two companies of the 94th Regiment, being a total of 264 men, three women, and two children, and the disproportionately large train of thirty-four ox-waggons, or an ox-waggon capable of carrying five thousand pounds' weight to every eight persons. And here I may remark that it is this enormous amount of baggage, without which it

appears to be impossible to move the smallest body of men, that renders infantry regiments almost useless for service in South Africa except for garrisoning purposes. Both Zulus and Boers can get over the ground at thrice the pace possible to the unfortunate soldier, and both races despise them accordingly. The Zulus call our infantry "pack oxen." In this particular instance, Colonel Anstruther's defeat, or rather, annihilation, is to a very great extent referable to his enormous baggage train; since, in the first place, had he not lost valuable days in collecting more waggons, he would have been safe in Pretoria before danger arose. It must also be acknowledged that his arrangements on the line of march were somewhat reckless, though it can hardly be said that he was ignorant of his danger. Thus we find that Colonel Bellairs wrote to Colonel Anstruther, warning him of the probability of an attack, and impressing on him the necessity of keeping a good look-out, the letter being received and acknowledged by the latter on the 17th December.

To this warning was added a still more impressive one that came to my knowledge privately. A gentleman well known to me received, on the morning after the troops had passed through the town of Middleburg on their way to Pretoria, a visit from an old Boer with whom he was on friendly terms, who had purposely come to tell him that a large patrol was out to ambush the troops on the Pretoria road. My informant having convinced himself of the truth of the statement, at once rode after the soldiers, and catching them up some distance from Middleburg, told Colonel Anstruther what he had heard, imploring him, he said, with all the energy he could command, to take

better precautions against surprise. The Colonel, however, laughed at his fears, and told him that if the Boers came "he would frighten them away with the big drum."

At one o'clock on Sunday, the 20th December, the column was marching along about a mile and a half from a place known as Bronker's Splint, and thirty-eight miles from Pretoria, when suddenly a large number of mounted Boers were seen in loose formation on the left side of the road. The band was playing at the time, and the column was extended over more than half a mile, the rearguard being about a hundred yards behind the last waggon. The band stopped playing on seeing the Boers, and the troops halted, when a man was seen advancing with a white flag, whom Colonel Anstruther went out to meet, accompanied by Conductor Egerton, a civilian. They met about one hundred and fifty yards from the column, and the man gave Colonel Anstruther a letter, which announced the establishment of the South African Republic, stated that until they heard Lanyon's reply to their proclamation they did not know if they were at war or not; that, consequently, they could not allow any movements of troops, which would be taken as a declaration of war. This letter was signed by Joubert, one of the Triumvirate. Colonel Anstruther replied that he was ordered to Pretoria, and to Pretoria he must go.

Whilst this conference was going on, the Boers, of whom there were quite five hundred, had gradually closed round the column, and took up positions behind rocks and trees which afforded them excellent cover, whilst the troops were on a bare plain, and before

Colonel Anstruther reached his men a murderous fire was poured in upon them from all sides. The fire was hotly returned by the soldiers. Most of the officers were struck down by the first volley, having, no doubt, been picked out by the marksmen. The firing lasted about fifteen minutes, and at the end of that time seven out of the nine officers were down killed and wounded; an eighth (Captain Elliot), one of the two who escaped untouched, being reserved for an even more awful fate. The majority of the men were also down, and had the hail of lead continued much longer it is clear that nobody would have been left. Colonel Anstruther, who was lying badly wounded in five places, seeing what a hopeless state affairs were in, ordered the bugler to sound the cease firing, and surrendered. One of the three officers who were not much hurt was, most providentially, Dr. Ward, who had but a slight wound in the thigh; all the others, except Captain Elliot and one lieutenant, were either killed or died from the effects of their wounds. There were altogether 56 killed and 101 wounded, including a woman, Mrs. Fox. Twenty more afterwards died of their wounds. The Boer loss appears to have been very small.

After the fight Conductor Egerton, with a sergeant, was allowed to walk into Pretoria to obtain medical assistance, the Boers refusing to give him a horse, or even to allow him to use his own. The Boer leader also left Dr. Ward eighteen men and a few stores for the wounded, with which he made shift as best he could. Nobody can read this gentleman's report without being much impressed with the way in which, though wounded himself, he got through his terrible

task of, without assistance, attending to the wants of 101 sufferers. Beginning the task at 2 P.M., it took him till six the next morning before he had seen the last man. It is to be hoped that his services have met with some recognition. Dr. Ward remained near the scene of the massacre with his wounded men till the declaration of peace, when he brought them down to Maritzburg, having experienced great difficulty in obtaining food for them during so many weeks.

This is a short account of what I must, with reluctance, call a most cruel and carefully planned massacre. I may mention that a Zulu driver, who was with the rearguard, and escaped into Natal, stated that the Boers shot all the wounded men who formed that body. His statement was to a certain extent borne out by the evidence of one of the survivors, who stated that all the bodies found in that part of the field (nearly three-quarters of a mile away from the head of the column), had a bullet hole through the head or breast in addition to their other wounds.

The Administrator of the Transvaal in council thus comments on the occurrence in an official minute:—"The surrounding and gradual hemming in under a flag of truce of a force, and the selection of spots from which to direct their fire, as in the case of the unprovoked attack by the rebels upon Colonel Anstruther's force, is a proceeding of which very few like incidents can be mentioned in the annals of civilised warfare."

The Boer leaders, however, were highly elated at their success, and celebrated it in a proclamation of which the following is an extract:—"Inexpressible is the gratitude of the burghers for this blessing conferred on them. Thankful to the brave General F.

Joubert and his men who have upheld the honour of the Republic on the battlefield. Bowed down in the dust before Almighty God, who had thus stood by them, and, with a loss of over a hundred of the enemy, only allowed two of ours to be killed."

In view of the circumstances of the treacherous hemming in and destruction of this small body of unprepared men, most people would think this language rather high-flown, not to say blasphemous.

On the news of this disaster reaching Pretoria, Sir Owen Lanyon issued a proclamation placing the country under martial law. As the town was large, straggling, and incapable of defence, all the inhabitants, amounting to over four thousand souls, were ordered up to camp, where the best arrangements possible were made for their convenience. In these quarters they remained for three months, driven from their comfortable homes, and cheerfully enduring all the hardships, want, and discomforts consequent on their position, whilst they waited in patience for the appearance of that relieving column that never came. People in England hardly understand what these men and women went through because they chose to remain loyal. Let them suppose that all the inhabitants of an ordinary English town, with the exception of the class known as poor people, which can hardly be said to exist in a colony, were at an hour's notice ordered—all, the aged and the sick, delicate women, and tiny children—to leave their homes to the mercy of the enemy, and crowd up in a little space under shelter of a fort, with nothing but canvas tents or sheds to cover them from the fierce summer suns and rains, and the coarsest rations to feed them; whilst the

husbands and brothers were daily engaged with a cunning and dangerous enemy, and sometimes brought home wounded or dead. They will then have some idea of what was gone through by the loyal people of Pretoria, in their weak confidence in the good faith of the English Government.

The arrangements made for the defence of the town were so ably and energetically carried out by Sir Owen Lanyon, assisted by the military officers, that no attack upon it was ever attempted. It seems to me that the organisation that could provide for the penning up of four thousand people for months, and carry it out without the occurrence of a single unpleasantness or expression of discontent, must have had something remarkable about it. Of course, it would have been impossible without the most loyal co-operation on the part of those concerned. Indeed everybody in the town lent a helping hand; judges served out rations, members of the Executive inspected nuisances, and so forth. There was only one instance of "striking;" and then, of all people in the world, it was the five civil doctors who, thinking it a favourable opportunity to fleece the Government, combined to demand five guineas a-day each for their services. I am glad to say that they did not succeed in their attempt at extortion.

On the 23d December, the Boer leaders issued a second proclamation in reply to that of Sir O. Lanyon of the 18th, which is characterised by an utter absence of regard for the truth, being, in fact, nothing but a tissue of impudent falsehoods. It accuses Sir O. Lanyon of having bombarded women and children, of arming natives against the Boers, and of firing on the Boers

without declaring war. Not one of these accusations has any foundation in fact, as the Boers well knew; but they also knew that Sir Owen, being shut up in Pretoria, was not in a position to rebut their charges, which they hoped might, to some extent, be believed, and create sympathy for them in other parts of the world. This was the reason of the issue of the proclamation, which well portrays the character of its framers.

Life at Pretoria was varied by occasional sorties against the Boer laagers, situated at different points in the neighbourhood, generally about six or eight miles from the town. These expeditions were carried out with considerable success, though with some loss, the heaviest incurred being when the Boers, having treacherously hoisted the white flag, opened a heavy fire on the Pretoria forces, as soon as they, beguiled into confidence, emerged from their cover. In the course of the war, one in every four of the Pretoria mounted volunteers was killed or wounded.

But perhaps the most serious of all the difficulties the Government had to meet was that of keeping the natives in check. As has before been stated, they were devotedly attached to our rule, and, during the three years of its continuance, had undergone what was to them a strange experience, they had neither been murdered, beaten, or enslaved. Naturally they were in no hurry to return to the old order of things, in which murder, flogging, and slavery were events of everyday occurrence. Nor did the behaviour of the Boers on the outbreak of the war tend to reconcile them to any such idea. Thus we find that the farmers had pressed a number of natives from Waterberg into

one of their laagers (Zwart Koppies); two of them tried to run away, a Boer saw them and shot them both. Again, on the 7th January, a native reported to the authorities at Pretoria that he and some others were returning from the Diamond Fields driving some sheep. A Boer came and asked them to sell the sheep. They refused, whereupon he went away, but returning with some other Dutchmen fired on the Kafirs, killing one.

On the 2d January information reached Pretoria that on the 26th December some Boers fired on some natives who were resting outside Potchefstroom and killed three; the rest fled, whereupon the Boers took the cattle they had with them.

On the 11th January some men, who had been sent from Pretoria with despatches for Standerton, were taken prisoners. Whilst prisoners they saw ten men returning from the Fields stopped by the Boers and ordered to come to the laager. They refused and ran away, were fired on, five being killed and one getting his arm broken.

These are a few instances of the treatment meted out to the unfortunate natives, taken at haphazard from the official reports. There are plenty more of the same nature if anybody cares to read them.

As soon as the news of the rising reached them, every chief of any importance sent in to offer aid to Government, and many of them, especially Montsioa, our old ally in the Keate Award district, took the loyals of the neighbourhood under their protection. Several took charge of Government property and cattle during the disturbances, and one had four or five thousand pounds in gold, the product of a recently collected tax, given him to take care of by the Com-

missioner of his district, who was afraid that the money would be seized by the Boers. In every instance the property entrusted to their charge was returned intact. The loyalty of all the native chiefs under very trying circumstances (for the Boers were constantly attempting to cajole or frighten them into joining them) is a remarkable proof of the great affection of the Kafirs, more especially those of the Basuto tribes, who love peace better than war, for the Queen's rule. The Government of Pretoria need only have spoken one word to set an enormous number of armed men in motion against the Boers, with the most serious results to the latter. Any other Government in the world would, in its extremity, have spoken that word, but, fortunately for the Boers, it is against English principles to set black against white under any circumstances.

Besides the main garrison at Pretoria there were forts defended by soldiery and loyals at the following places:—Potchefstroom, Rustenburg, Lydenburg, Marabastad, and Wakkerstroom, none of which were taken by the Boers.[1]

One of the first acts of the Triumvirate was to despatch a large force from Heidelberg with orders to advance into Natal Territory, and seize the pass over the Drakensberg known as Lang's Nek, so as to dispute the advance of any relieving column. This movement was promptly executed, and strong Boer troops patrolled Natal country almost up to Newcastle.

The news of the outbreak, followed as it was by

[1] Colonel Winsloe, however, being short of provisions, was beguiled

that of the Bronker's' Spruit massacre, and Captain Elliot's murder, created a great excitement in Natal. All available soldiers were at once despatched up country, together with a naval brigade, who, on arrival at Newcastle, brought up the strength of the Imperial troops of all arms to about a thousand men. On the 10th January Sir George Colley left Maritzburg to join the force at Newcastle, but at this time nobody dreamt that he meant to attack the Nek with such an insignificant column. It was known that the loyals and troops who were shut up in the various towns in the Transvaal had sufficient provisions to last for some months, and that there was therefore nothing to necessitate a forlorn hope. Indeed the possibility of Sir George Colley attempting to enter the Transvaal was not even speculated upon until just before his advance, it being generally considered as out of the question.

The best illustration I can give of the feeling that existed about the matter is to quote my own case. I had been so unfortunate as to land in Natal with my wife and servants just as the Transvaal troubles began, my intention being to proceed to a place I had near Newcastle. For some weeks I remained in Maritzburg, but finding that the troops were to concentrate on Newcastle, and being besides heartily wearied of the great expense and discomfort of hotel life in that town, I determined to go on up country, looking on it as being as safe as any place in the colony. Of course the possibility of Sir George attacking the Nek before the arrival of the reinforcements did not ente into my calculations, as I thought it a venture th no sensible man would undertake. On the day

my start, however, there was a rumour about the town that the General was going to attack the Boer position. Though I did not believe it, I thought it as well to go and ask the Colonial Secretary, Colonel Mitchell, privately, if there was any truth in it, adding that if there was, as I had a pretty intimate knowledge of the Boers and their shooting powers, and what the inevitable result of such a move would be, I should certainly prefer, as I had ladies with me, to remain where I was. Colonel Mitchell told me frankly that he knew no more about Sir George's plans than I did; but he added I might be sure that so able and prudent a soldier would not do anything rash. His remark concurred with my own opinion; so I started, and on arrival at Newcastle a week later was met by the intelligence that Sir George had advanced that morning to attack the Nek. To return was almost impossible, since both horses and travellers were pretty nearly knocked up. Also, anybody who has travelled with his family in summer-time over the awful track of alternate slough and boulders between Maritzburg and Newcastle, known in the colony as a road, will understand that at the time the adventurous voyagers would far rather risk being shot than face a return journey.

The only thing to do under the circumstances was to await the course of events, which were now about to develop themselves with startling rapidity. The little town of Newcastle was at this time an odd sight, and remained so all through the war. The hotels were crowded to overflowing with refugees, and on any spare patch of land were erected tents, mud canvas houses, and every kind of covering that

could be utilised under the pressure of necessity, to house the many homeless families who had succeeded in effecting their escape from the Transvaal, many o[illegible] whom were reduced to great straits.

On the morning of the 28th January, anybod[illegible] listening attentively in the neighbourhood of Newcastl[illegible] could hear the distant boom of heavy guns. We wer[illegible] not kept long in suspense, for in the afternoon new[illegible] arrived that Sir George had attacked the Nek, an[illegible] failed with heavy loss. The excitement in the tow[illegible] was intense, for, in addition to other consideration[illegible] the 58th Regiment, which had suffered most, h[illegible] been quartered there for some time, and both th[illegible] officers and men were personally known to the i[illegible] habitants.

The story of the fight is well known, and n[illegible] little repetition, and a very sad story it is. The B[illegible] who at that time were some 2000 strong, were p[illegible] and entrenched on steep hills, against whic[illegible] George Colley hurled a few hundred soldiers. T[illegible] a forlorn hope, but so gallant was the charg[illegible] cially that of the mounted squadron led by [illegible] Bronlow, that at one time it nearly succeeded. nothing could stand under the withering fire fro[illegible] Boer schanses, and as regards the foot soldiers, never had a chance. Colonel Deane tried to t[illegible] them up the hill with a rush, with the result th[illegible] by the time they reached the top, some of the me[illegible] were actually sick from exhaustion, and none coul[illegible] hold a rifle steady. There on the bare hill-top they crouched and lay, whilst the pitiless fire from redoubt and rock lashed them like hail, till at last human nature could bear it no longer, and what was left of

hem retired slowly down the slope. But for many hat gallant charge was their last earthly action. As y charged they fell, and where they fell they were fterwards buried. The casualties, killed and wounded, mounted to 195, which, considering the small number of troops engaged in the actual attack, is enormously heavy, and shows more plainly than words can tell e desperate nature of the undertaking. Amongst e killed were Colonel Deane, Major Poole, Major ingeston, and Lieutenant Elwes. Major Essex was e only staff officer engaged who escaped, the same icer who was one of the fortunate four who lived rough Isandhlwana. On this occasion his usual od fortune attended him, for though his horse was d and his helmet knocked off, he was not touched. Boer loss was very trivial.

r George Colley, in his admirably lucid despatch this occurrence addressed to the Secretary of for War, does not enter much into the question he motives that prompted him to attack, simply that his object was to relieve the besieged . He does not appear to have taken into con- ion, what was obvious to anybody who knew ountry and the Boers, that even if he had suc- ed in forcing the Nek, in itself almost an impossi- ity, he could never have operated with any success the Transvaal with so small a column, without avalry, and with an enormous train of waggons. He would have been harassed day and night by the Boer skirmishers, his supplies cut off, and his advance made practically impossible. Also the Nek would have been re-occupied behind him, since he could not have detached sufficient men to hold it, and in all proba-

bility Newcastle, his base of supplies, would have faller into the hands of the enemy.

The moral effect of our defeat on the Boers was very great. Up to this time there had been many secret doubts amongst a large section of them as t what the upshot of an encounter with the troop might be; and with this party, in the same way that defeat, or even the anxiety of waiting to be attacked, would have turned the scale one way, victory turned it the other. It gave them unbounded confidence i their own superiority, and infused a spirit of cohesion and mutual reliance into their ranks which had befc been wanting. Waverers wavered no longer, but g a loyal adherence to the good cause, and, what w still more acceptable, large numbers of volunteers —whatever President Brand may say to the contrary —poured in from the Orange Free State.

What Sir George Colley's motive was in making rash a move is, of course, quite inexplicable to t outside observer. It was said at the time in N that he was a man with a theory: namely, that sı bodies of men properly handled were as useful and likely to obtain the object in view as a large forc Whether or no this was so, I am not prepared to say but it is undoubtedly the case that very clever mer have sometimes very odd theories, and it may be that he was a striking instance in point.

For some days after the battle at Lang's Nek affairs were quiet, and it was hoped that they would remain so till the arrival of the reinforcements, which were on their way out. The hope proved a vain one On the 7th February it was reported that the escort proceeding from Newcastle to the General's camp with